NICKELODEON®

movies

TITLE:

Widow's Broom

COPY

DATE:

9-16-03

10900 Wilshire Boulevard • Suite 1400
Los Angeles, California 90024
Tel 310 208 8525 • Fax 310 208 1764

WIDOW'S BROOM

Screenplay

By

Chris Van Allsburg

based on his book

No portion of this script may be performed, reproduced, or used by any means, or quoted or published in any medium without the prior written consent of Radar Pictures.

February 27, 2003

Copyright 2003
RADAR PICTURES
GOLDEN MEAN PRODUCTIONS
All Rights Reserved

EXT. DAY - MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE

The CREDITS roll as we follow a large RAVEN riding the afternoon thermals. Scraggly pines give way to barren rocks that hold snow within their crevices.

The bird alights on a rocky ridge, beside a dozen other ravens. We hear VOICES SHOUTING, like boxing fans at ringside, punctuated by the sharp crack of wood hitting wood.

Moving past the ravens, we see BLACK ROBED WITCHES gathered in a circle on the terraced area below, surrounded by small dwellings carved out of rock, watching TWO BROOMS fight.

Larger than ordinary brooms, with long thick shafts and knee high bristles, the Brooms thrust and parry, striking each other with their shafts, shuffling and hopping on their bristles, vying to grab a SWORD that is stuck in the ground.

Cutting back and forth from the Witch's faces to the fight, we see their bloodthirsty interest in the combat. PHILOMENA and PINGREL, side by side, show the keenest interest.

One Broom, gaining the advantage, wraps its prehensile shaft around the sword's handle, lifting it high in the air. The Broom spins and brings the blade down, missing the shaft of the other Broom, but slicing its bristles and the braiding that holds them to the shaft.

The injured Broom "looks" down as the noisy crowd falls silent. Its bristles drop away. The naked shaft is momentarily suspended a couple feet off the ground. Then it drops down and, balanced for a moment, receives the coup de grace as the other Broom slices it in two pieces that drop to the ground with a lifeless "clunk" as the witches cheer.

As the crowd disperses, we see Pingril, now dejected, and Philomena, jubilant. She prods the pieces of the shaft with her pointed black boot.

PHILOMENA
(mocking)
Oh dear, Pingrel. And on All Hallows Eve.
(to the triumphant Broom)
Let's go.

The Broom plants the sword in the ground and follows Philomena and a group of her cronies as they depart.

Pingrel, with her companion ETTA, stands over the pieces of her Broom. She stomps on them, enraged.

PINGREL
Good for nothing...wretched...

ETTA
I guess you won't be coming along tonight.

EXT. A TERRACED GARDEN

On a plot of earth, hugging the mountain side and thick with vegetation, a BROOM drags a bucket along a garden path. It stops and its shaft lowers around an oversized zucchini. As it places the zucchini in the basket with similar specimens, a shadow falls across it. The Broom lifts up to behold the ominous figure of Pingrel.

PINGREL
You'll do.

She reaches for the Broom, which takes a hop back.

PINGREL (CONT'D)
Come here, damn you.

The Broom hops down the garden row which leads to the edge of the cliff. It looks down and shudders, and turns to see Pingrel approach it. She grabs hold of it.

EXT. PINNACLE OF MOUNTAIN AERIE - DUSK

A line of witches moves up a narrow wind-blown stone stairway. Some carry torches, all carry Brooms.

They are gathering on a cliff edge that looks out onto a sheer drop, thousands of feet down. Pingrel ascends the stairway, one of the last in the line. Her friend, Etta, already at the top, sees her and waits.

Philomena climbs up onto a boulder. Her black robes flutter as she poses before a dramatic sky that catches the last bit of daylight. She yells out, in manic glee:

PHILOMENA
Sisters, are we ready?

WITCHES
YES!

Holding her Broom in one hand, Philomena leaps off the boulder into a free fall, then gracefully mounts it and accelerates skyward. Other witches climb onto the boulder. Pingrel and Etta, at the rear of the crowd, move forward. The Broom Pingrel acquired in the garden is unlike the others we see.

Its bristles are disheveled and while the other Brooms are rigid in their mistress' hands, this Broom bounces up and down. It bends its shaft at an angle to "look" left and right.

Pingrel slaps the Broom with the back of her hand.

PINGREL
Straighten up!

The Broom becomes rigid.

ETTA
You got that from Droonmear?

PINGREL
What if I did?

ETTA
That's the one she keeps in her garden, isn't it? You know, she's only flown it once. There's something wrong with it.

Etta and Pingrel have advanced to the head of the line. Etta climbs up onto the boulder, and looks back at her friend.

ETTA
The devil's blessing on you, Pingrel. You are going to need it with that thing.

Etta turns and leaps. Except Pingrel, all the witches have departed. She stands, Broom at her side, ready to jump. The broom goes limp. She shakes it violently. It becomes rigid.

PINGREL
You're going to fly tonight or tomorrow I'll use you for kindling! Understand?

The witch leaps from the railing, and flies off.

EXT. MOUNTAINS

The witches dive recklessly between spruce trees.

EXT. COLONIAL ROADSIDE INN - NIGHT

THREE TRAVELERS exit, followed by an INN KEEPER with a LANTERN.

TRAVELER
I hope the worst thing we see on this road is a bunch of old hags on brooms.

INN KEEPER
I'm warning you. Around these parts people stay inside on All Hallows Eve.

The traveler's TWO COMPANIONS, mounting their horses, laugh. The sound of flapping cloth draws their attention skyward. The witches come flying over tree tops and down on them. The horses shie, throwing their riders.

Two witches take the Traveler by the shoulders and drag him, heels to the road, rolling into the under brush. Another witch grabs the lantern from the Inn Keeper.

EXT. BARN

A FATHER and SON struggle to get their sheep into the barn.

SON
Hurry, Father!

Over the pasture, the witches approach. The barn door closes. A witch flies by, throwing the Lantern against it, which explodes in a burst of flame.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF WICKET - NIGHT

The witches approach Wicket, a quintessential New England Village. A white church, its lights ablaze, is visible at the edge of the village green.

EXT. CHURCH DOORS

Along with THREE VILLAGERS outside we see more villagers gathered just inside the open church doors.

VILLAGER 1
(alarmed, pointing skyward)
There they are!

VILLAGER 2
(to crowd gathered at doorway)
Back inside!

The witches swoop down as the doors slam shut. They fly around the building, cackling, then ascend spiraling around the moonlit steeple. Pingrel's foot strikes the church's lightning rod, bending it, as they fly off.

EXT. ROAD OUT OF WICKET - COVERED BRIDGE

One by one witches fly through the bridge.

EXT. AIRBORNE - APPROACHING BRIDGE

Pingrel and Etta fall behind as Pingrel urges her Broom along. It lurches forward unevenly, its shaft drooping.

PINGREL
Come on, you fool!

Etta pulls ahead and begins her descent. Pingrel follows. She descends below the tops of the trees lining the road. She pulls up, but the Broom continues to descend.

PINGREL
Up you idiot, Up! You're too low!

The bristles scrape the dirt road. It bounces up. They are now too high and we see, from Pingrel's POV, the rapid approach of the top of the covered bridge entrance.

PINGREL
EEIYI!

EXT. WITHIN COVERED BRIDGE

CRASH! Pingrel slams into the bridge entrance. Stripped from the Broom, she falls to the ground. The Broom skids along the wood planked bridge deck, catching its tip between the planks. It flips up, bristles in the air, and then, "crack!". It snaps and falls to the deck. Its tip, almost broken off, is stuck between the planks.

The Broom pulls itself free and stands with its tip hanging from its shaft. It hops to the motionless witch.

PINGREL
(weakly)
Kindling.

The Broom takes a step back.

PINGREL
You're going to make a nice warm fire.

As Pingrel rises shakily, the Broom hops away.

EXT. ROADSIDE BY BRIDGE

The Broom hops down the road as the witch unsteadily sets out after it. In the background a LIGHTNING SPLITTER is visible, a house-style characterized by its odd, steeply pitched roof. The Broom hops off the road and over the underbrush.

PINGREL (cont'd)
I'll pull your bristles out, one by one.

The Broom hides behind a SMALL OAK TREE. It hops up and hooks its broken tip on a branch and begins to swing. At the roadside, Etta lands beside Pingrel.

PINGREL (cont'd)
When I find him I'm going to roast him.

ETTA
Come on, leave him. You can ride with me.

In the background A MAN appears in the open door of the lightning splitter, holding a lantern.

MAN
(stepping out of the house)
Who goes there?

WOMAN (O.S.)
(from inside the house)
Arno, Arno Larsen. Come back in here!

The witches ignore them. Pingrel pushes into the underbrush. Etta follows. Pingrel spots the Broom hiding in the tree.

PINGREL
Oh, there you are.

Pingrel and Etta look up. The Broom's shaft trembles.

PINGREL
Oh, you like being in the tree?

Pingrel places her hands on the tree trunk, and chants:

PINGREL
Lynsus talo, Zeblim sims / Roots and berries, Nuts and limbs / Keep your guest Who hides within / Lynsus talo, Zeblim sims.

WISPS of SMOKE appear at the witch's hands. The tree branches wrap around the struggling Broom, trapping it in the oak sapling. Pingrel laughs. Arno approaches the witches.

ARNO LARSEN
Who goes there?

Pingrel and Etta mount Etta's broom. They roar out of the underbrush and bowl Arno Larsen over. He watches them disappear in the night sky.

The camera holds on the starlit sky, which lightens to the cerulean blue of a sunny day. The camera pans down and we see the LIGHTNING SPLITTER, now overgrown and dilapidated and, where the small tree stood, an immense GOLDEN LEAFED OAK. It stands near a paved road that leads into the covered bridge that the witches passed through. A small vegetable stand sits between the tree and bridge advertising, eggs, cider and produce. Beyond the house, the river over which the bridge passes is visible. An old station wagon and TRACTOR are in the driveway beside the house.

A shiny black SUV goes by and passes into the bridge.

EXT. DRIVEWAY BY LIGHTNING SPLITTER (SHAW HOUSE) - DAY

The lower half of a body is visible, dressed in coveralls, lying beneath the tractor. We hear the sounds of straining, as the partly concealed figure struggles with some task. Then:

VOICE
Come on, you crummy little piece of ...

A loud banging of metal on metal can be heard. Silence.

VOICE
How's that? Want some more?

The pounding resumes. A boy, 8 year old OWEN SHAW, kneels beside the figure. Dressed in thread bare Sunday best with a clip-on bow tie, he tugs at the exposed leg.

OWEN
Come on, Mom you've got to get ready.

The coveralled figure slides out from beneath the tractor. It is the Widow, MINNA SHAW. She holds a grease covered part, looks at it, then tosses it a bucket.

MINNA
Piece of junk.

OWEN
Come on, Mom.

Minna is in her mid-thirties, tall and attractive, even with the grease smudges on her face. Her disheveled hair is tied up on the top of her head. She eyes Owen and the two figures standing behind him, his sister, thirteen year old LUCY, and ADDIE LARSEN (GRANDMA), Minna's grandmother, a spunky octogenarian.

GRANDMA
Thought you wanted to come along. Maybe go to Swensons after, get some ice cream.

MINNA
I've got too much to do around here.

OWEN
But you said...

MINNA
I said, I might. All right? But I can't. Now just go without me.

GRANDMA
Owen, mom will come some other time.

Owen, Lucy and Grandma walk toward the old station wagon.

LUCY
(to Owen)
See? I told you she wouldn't come.

EXT. WICKET VILLAGE GREEN

An aerial view looking over the old church steeple with the bent lightning rod, pans down. We see a quaint New England village green surrounded by red leafed maples. The church parking lot is full. We hear ORGAN MUSIC from within.

INTERIOR CHURCH - SANCTUARY - DAY

REVEREND PETERS, a stern looking sixty year old rises to address his congregation as the mighty organ falls silent.

REVEREND PETERS
As you all know, our annual Harvest Dance is just a week away. I hope you've gotten a chance to meet this year's honorary Chairmen, Doug and Jean Spivey. I can't praise this wonderful couple enough.

He pauses and smiles down at the front pew, where DOUG and JEAN SPIVEY, a couple in their late-thirties, overweight and under dressed, sit with their fidgety sons, RUSSELL, age thirteen and DOUG JR. age eleven.

REVEREND PETERS
It was just a year ago, before they'd even moved to our community, Doug and Jean came to me and asked, "Reverend, what can we do for the Church"?

REVEREND PETERS (cont'd)
When I told them we needed to fix the organ they said, "Fix it? Let's get a new one!" Well, today, our church is home to the finest organ in the state. I'd like you all to join me in thanking the good Lord for sending these fine people here to be our new neighbors.

As the parishioners briefly bow their heads, Doug and Jean Spivey exchange self-satisfied smiles. All rise when the organ begins to play another hymn.

The camera lingers on a parishioner, JACK WILKIE, standing at the back of the congregation, singing with ardor. He is in his twenties, boyish looking, with a military style crew cut.

INT. CHURCH - HALLWAY

A seven year old girl, SALLY, exits a doorway and moves quickly down the hall.

INT. CHURCH - SANCTUARY

As the congregation sings, Sally moves down the aisle and stops at a pew, where she motions to Lucy Shaw, standing by her great grandmother. Unnoticed by her great grandmother, Lucy is led out of the sanctuary by Sally.

INT. CHURCH - HALLWAY

Sally and Lucy walk quickly down the hall.

SALLY
...just won't come down. Mrs. Robbins is really really mad at him.

INT. CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Lucy's brother, Owen, is standing on top of a tall bookcase. A dozen 5-8 year olds gaze up at him as he addresses MRS. ROBBINS, the sixtyish spinster Sunday School teacher.

OWEN
...make any sense? Lots of people die, not just old people. Kids, even. What'd they do that's so bad?

Five year old Jessica speaks up.

JESSICA
My cat died. She was only five.

OWEN
See? If He's such a big deal, how come so much bad stuff happens all the time?

MRS. ROBBINS
If you'd come down from there, Owen Shaw, we can talk about it.

Jessica pulls on Mrs. Robbins' dress.

JESSICA
Yeah, Mrs. Robbins, how come?

Sally and Lucy enter the room.

MRS. ROBBINS
Lucy. We're having a little problem here. Can you talk some sense into your brother before he breaks his neck?

Lucy looks up at her brother who hangs his head.

LUCY
Do I have to come up there?

Owen is unresponsive.

MRS. ROBBINS
The Reverend's going to hear about this. Do we need to have your mother come in?

Lucy chortles dismissively.

LUCY
Good luck. Mom's awful busy.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY

Minna sits astride the tractor. It turns over but does not start. She mumbles curses at it. It finally starts with a giant belch of black exhaust. Minna guns the engine a few times, kills it and then dismounts to collect her tools.

EXT. ROAD AND COVERED BRIDGE

A shiny black SUV driven by Doug Spivey roars through the bridge. There is a single large pumpkin left by the vegetable stand, at the edge of the road. Spivey hits it.

INT. SPIVEY SUV

DOUG JR.
Good shot, dad.

The Spivey family laughs.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY.

Doug Spivey pulls into one of two driveways just beyond the vegetable stand, and waits for an ornate gate to open.

EXT. DRIVEWAY BY SHAW HOUSE

Minna wipes her hands on a rag, glowering at the Spiveys.

INT. SPIVEY SUV

Jean Spivey spies Minna.

JEAN
Oh God, there she is. I think she saw you, Doug.

SPIVEY
Big deal. She shouldn't put the pumpkins so close to the road.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

The gates open. Spivey is about to go forward when a cluster of acorns hits the hood of the SUV. Spivey leaps out.

DOUG,JR.
What's wrong, dad?

Spivey inspects the hood, and looks up malevolently at the golden leafed tree. The camera pans up into the tall oak. Within the rustling leaves we can make out THE BROOM, now entwined in thick gnarled oak branches.

SPIVEY
(o.s.)
Damn acorns.

JEAN
Come on, Doug.

The camera pans down and follows Spivey's SUV. As it proceeds up the driveway, a startling sight comes into view. The little lightning splitter now sits in the shadow of a huge contemporary "TROPHY HOUSE".

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY

An old station wagon pulls in with Granny, Lucy and Owen. Lucy gets out first. Minna approaches.

MINNA
How was church?

LUCY
Maybe you ought to come some time, see for yourself.

MINNA
You know how much work I've got to...

LUCY
(in a sing song mocking voice)
Chop the wood, feed the chickens, pick the apples, chop the wood, feed the chickens, pick the apples...

Minna turns and walks toward the vegetable stand. Granny approaches Lucy, who watches her mother resentfully.

LUCY
I can't even remember.

GRANDMA
Remember what, honey?

LUCY
What she was like before daddy died.

GRANDMA
I know. Not grief anymore, hardened into something else.

LUCY
Someone else.

Lucy walks away. Owen gets on a rope swing hung from the Oak.

EXT. VEGETABLE STAND

Granny joins Minna, who tosses pumpkin bits into a bucket.

GRANDMA
You should have been in church today, Minna. Seems Owen gave a sermon. Shared his doubts about the Supreme Being with the rest of Sunday school. Mrs. Roberts wants you to come see her, talk about it.

MINNA
He's entitled to his own thoughts.

GRANDMA
Cripes, Minna, you gotta' take some interest here. Can't keep hiding yourself away. It's been near three years.

Minna looks in the "Honor" CIGAR BOX at the vegetable stand and takes out some money, then arranges the bottles of cider and a display of APPLE BUTTER jars.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
How'd we do? Looks like the apple butter's selling good. Heard some folks at church say it's your best ever.

Minna lifts the wheelbarrow and heads back up the driveway. Owen is now flying high on the swing.

MINNA
Well, we better sell a lot if we're gonna get the roof fixed before winter.

Minna stops, embittered, looking at Spivey's monstrosity, which is uphill and looms menacingly over the Shaw property.

OWEN
Hey mom, look!

Minna is too absorbed to pay attention to Owen.

MINNA
If I could just undo it. I'd give every penny back.

GRANDMA
Don't have it to give back.

MINNA
(bitterly)
You know what I mean.

GRANDMA
Now don't start agitating yourself again. What's done is done. Bank was about to take the land anyway. Besides, selling wasn't the mistake. It was trusting Mr. Big Shot. "Little log cabin", my eye.
(she snorts dismissively)

MINNA
I'm afraid Mr. Big Shot is not going to be happy til he's got this place, too.

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

The living room is an immense white carpeted space with chrome and white leather furniture. Large windows look out toward the river with Minna's property in between. Jean Spivey stands beside a diaphanous curtain gazing down at Minna Shaw and Grandma. Her husband enters.

JEAN
(aggrieved, slightly desperate)
This is a nightmare, Doug.

He joins her at the window. Though the widow's home is charming from some points of view, the Spiveys look out over a sagging barn, a rusty tractor, clothes on the line, messy piles of cord wood, and chickens in an old hen house.

JEAN
We finally build our dream house. But I wake up in the morning and go to the window and see.... That!

SPIVEY
I know. Her chickens, that tractor...

JEAN
And look at those sheets flapping around, for God's sake.
(she leans towards the window)
Haven't you people ever heard of a clothes dryer?

She watches Minna mount the tractor and go up the driveway. Spivey puts his hand on his wife's shoulder to calm her.

JEAN
You said she'd sell once we got in here.

SPIVEY
Last offer I made was three times what the place is worth. People like her...

He is interrupted by the sound of a barking dog. Doug Jr. and Russell, holding a nasty looking white bull terrier on a chain, appear at the living room doorway. Spivey approaches.

RUSSELL
Dougie got too close to the chickens.

SPIVEY
Boy, he sure goes nutty when he gets a whiff of those birds. If he ever got a hold of one he'd probably...

Jean joins her husband as he looks down at the dog contemplatively.

JEAN
What is it, Doug?

SPIVEY
I bet our neighbor'd change her mind about selling if things got a little harder over there, down on the farm.

Blitz barks excitedly.

EXT. SHAW HOUSE - MORNING, SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Lucy crosses to the hen house carrying a basket.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Minna's kitchen is a cozy place with ancient appliances, soapstone sink and a wood burning stove. Minna is cooking. Grandma sits at the kitchen table while Owen stands in front of her. He is dressed in a black cape, breaches, white stockings and a band of black cloth covering one eye. He holds a walking stick. She positions a tricorn hat on his head, adjusts his cape, and looks at a picture of Blind Pew from "Treasure Island", comparing the picture to the boy.

GRANDMA
Gracious! It's BLIND PEW!

Owen approaches Minna, tapping his stick, pantomiming blindness.

OWEN
(comical deep pitched voice)
Give me your hand, woman.

Minna extends her hand and Owen puts a piece of paper in it. Minna looks at it - a black spot.

OWEN
Neat, huh? Blind Pew gives it to people before they die. I got lots of them.

EXT. WIDOW'S HEN HOUSE

Lucy, visibly upset, exits and rushes to the house.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

The back door flies open.

LUCY
(breathless)
Mom....mom....

MINNA
Lucy, what is it?

LUCY
Five of them, I think. He got five.

MINNA
What are you talking about?

LUCY
Fox. In the hen house. Killed five chickens.

OWEN
Killed 'em!? You mean dead.

Owen runs out, followed by his family.

EXT. WIDOW"S HEN HOUSE

The Shaw family surveys the carnage.

GRANDMA
This wasn't any fox.

MINNA
No... No, it sure wasn't. I've got a pretty good idea what it was.

GRANDMA
(angrily)
Me, too.

EXT. SPIVEY MANSION

Minna rings the bell beside the oversized doors repeatedly. Spivey answers in his bathrobe, followed by a docile Blitz.

SPIVEY
Why Mrs. Shaw, what an unexpected pleasure. Won't you come in?

MINNA
This isn't a social call. Your dog's been in my hen house. I've got five dead chickens over there to prove it.

SPIVEY
Oh, you must be mistaken. Blitz would never do that, would you boy?
(he pats the dog)
When did this happen?

MINNA
Last night.

SPIVEY
Well, It couldn't have been Blitz. He was sound asleep at the foot of our bed.

Minna eyes the dog and his master suspiciously.

MINNA
You keep that dog off my property. Understand?

SPIVEY
I assure you, Mrs. Shaw, he hasn't been <u>on</u> your property.

Minna turns and walks away. Spivey calls out to her.

SPIVEY
Say, given any thought to my offer?

INT. SHAW KITCHEN

The children sit eating breakfast. Minna drops her plate heavily on the table and throws herself into a chair. She wears an angry expression.

LUCY
You think he did it on purpose?

MINNA
Wouldn't surprise me, the creep.

OWEN
Why mom? Doesn't he like chickens?

MINNA
He doesn't like us.

Sounds issue from the open door leading to the cellar.

MINNA (cont'd)
(impatiently)
What's she doing down there?

Grandma emerges from the cellar with a rusty old shotgun.

GRANDMA
He's not running us off! I'm telling you, his dog's a goner, he ever comes round here again.

MINNA
Oh Grandma, he's not stupid enough to send his dog over again. That old thing doesn't work, anyway.

GRANDMA
Does so.

LUCY
We ought to shoot Spivey.

GRANDMA
Right!

Minna gets up and takes the gun away from Granny.

MINNA
We aren't shooting anybody or anything. At least not today.

An old kitchen clock chimes.

MINNA (cont'd)
You kids need to get ready. The bus'll be here soon.

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT PORCH

The door opens. Lucy and Owen exit. Minna follows, holding a brown bag. The school bus pulls up.

MINNA
Owen, you forgot your...

She stops when she sees a RED DUMP TRUCK by the giant oak that stands between the two driveways. Three WOOD CUTTERS (WAYNE, DARYL and CHUCK) stand at the base of the tree.

LUCY
What are they doing?

OWEN
Mom?

Minna doesn't take her eyes off the men.

MINNA
(repressing anger)
Come on, you'll be late

She marches down the porch steps with Lucy and Owen.

EXT. DRIVEWAY BY OAK TREE

At the end of the driveway, Minna, Lucy and Owen stop.

MINNA
You kids get on the bus.

LUCY
Mom, what's going on?

MINNA
You and your brother get on the bus.

The children go to the bus, looking back at their mother. Minna approaches the men. The tree cutters are a scruffy crew, dressed in overalls and flannel shirts, all in need of a shave. Wayne is in a harness, ready to go aloft.

MINNA
What are you doing here?

CHUCK
(nodding up driveway)
Ask him.

Spivey approaches, in a velour jogging suit, sipping coffee.

SPIVEY
Ah, good morning again, Mrs. Shaw.

In the background, Owen and Lucy follow the Spivey boys, Doug, Jr. also in costume, onto the bus.

MINNA
What's going on? What are they doing?

SPIVEY
I've got a problem with this tree.

MINNA
What kind of problem?

SPIVEY
It's dropping acorns.

MINNA
It's an oak tree. What do you expect?

SPIVEY
Well, they're falling on my car. It's gotta' go.

MINNA
You can't be serious.

SPIVEY
Listen, this tree is on my property. I'll do what I want with it.

He nods to the tree cutter in the harness.

SPIVEY
What are you waiting for? Go on.

Wayne begins to ascend the tree. Minna grabs him by the leg.

MINNA
Get out of that tree.

Daryl restrains her from behind. She takes a swing at him.

INT. SCHOOL BUS

Owen and Lucy move down the aisle, looking out the windows. The other kids and the bus driver stare as Minna puts a head-lock on Daryl and pulls him to the ground, kicking at Chuck as he tries to pull her off. The bus starts rolling.

EXT. WIDOW'S PORCH

Grandma steps onto the porch, with the SHOTGUN.

INT. SCHOOL BUS

The Spivey boys taunt the Shaw children, who are seated right in front of them.

DOUG, JR.
Hey, your mom could be on TV. You know, Big Time Wrestling.

The boys laugh, oblivious to the sound of a GUN SHOT, which Owen hears. He rises and turns back to look out.

OWEN
(to Lucy, worried)
Did you hear that?

Russell looks at Owen's costume.

RUSSELL
What are you supposed to be, Zorro or something? Where's your sword, Zorro?

LUCY
He's not Zorro, he's Blind Pew.

DOUG, JR.
Blind Pew?

The Spivey boys, holding their noses, collapse in laughter.

RUSSELL
He's P.U. all right.

Other kids nearby join in the laughter. Owen, goes over the back of his seat to get at Russell. The larger boy pushes Owen so hard, he falls into the floor between the seats.

LUCY
Leave him alone, you jerk.

RUSSELL
Hey! He started it.

Lucy helps Owen into his seat.

DOUG, JR.
Ooo! I hope you don't tell your mom.

RUSSELL (cont'd)
She might come beat us up.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - A FEW MINUTES LATER

A speeding police car traveling in the opposite direction goes by the school bus, SIREN WAILING.

EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

The police car exits the covered bridge and pulls up next to Minna's vegetable stand. Jack Wilkie gets out, adjusting his sunglasses and Troopers hat.

Wayne, Darryl and Chuck are hunkered down by the side of their truck, away from the widow's house.

WAYNE
You'd a told me back in High School I'd be wrestling with Minna Larsen some day, I'd think I was a pretty lucky guy.

The other two wood cutters laugh.

WAYNE
Geez, you remember watching her dance?

DARYL
Yeah, sure was something to look at then.

CHUCK
Problem was, Dick Shaw catch you looking at her, he'd twist your head off.

The wood cutters share another laugh. Jack approaches them.

CHUCK
Look here, Vermont's newest State's trooper. Nice uniform. You look like a regular Eagle Scout.

WAYNE
Hey Jack, ready for a cold winter?

JACK
You bet. One of the reasons I moved back here. What's going on? Radio said something about a gun shot.

INT. WIDOW'S FRONT HALL

Minna holds the shotgun. She and Granny look out the window.

MINNA
Great. Spivey called the police.

GRANDMA
(stifling laughter)
Look, Minna. Here he comes

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY.

Spivey, like a G.I. under fire, moves down his driveway.

EXT. WOODCUTTERS TRUCK

DARRYL
...kind of lost her marbles when he died.

Darryl taps his head with his finger.

WAYNE
...Never leaves the place now, turned into some kind of hermit or something.

CHUCK
You probably remember her. Name was Larsen before she got married.

JACK
Minna Larsen...yeah, I remember her. I was just a kid but she was a Homecoming Queen, wasn't she?

DARYL
Yeah, that's the one. A real knockout.

Jack looks at the Shaw house.

JACK
(quietly, wistfully)
Sure, I remember her.

CHUCK
Might not recognize her now.

Spivey arrives at the truck. Jack tips his hat to him.

SPIVEY
These fellows explain what happened?

JACK
Yes, sir.

SPIVEY
What's our plan? We need some backup?

JACK
Well, sir, I think I'll just go up there, see what's on their minds.

SPIVEY
It's your funeral.

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT YARD

Jack opens a rusty gate and passes under a vine covered arbor. The house's weathered shingles need paint, a few shutters are askew. He stops at the sagging porch steps.

JACK
Hello?

He climbs up the steps. The door opens and Jack sees Minna in the doorway, holding the shotgun. He goes for his sidearm.

JACK.
Ma'am, can you put that gun down?

Minna ignores his request, coming out onto the porch.

MINNA
Can't you put a stop to--

JACK
Ma'am, the gun.

Minna puts the gun aside.

JACK.
Could you tell me what's going on, Ma'am?

MINNA
That idiot is about to cut down a tree simply because...

JACK
Excuse me, ma'am. It's my understanding the tree is on his property.

MINNA
Well, it is, but...but that's not the point. He can't just cut a...

Jack holds up his hand to silence Minna.

JACK
Yes he can. It's his right. Our problem here is not the tree, ma'am. He claims your Grandmother took a shot at him.

MINNA
That's ridiculous. She wasn't aiming at anyone. She was only trying...

INT. WIDOW'S FRONT HALL

Granny, not visible to Jack, looks out the window.

GRANDMA
If I had another shot I'd nail that...

EXT. PORCH

Jack hears, indistinctly, Granny's voice.

JACK
Is that her? I'm going to have to speak to her, ma'am. This is pretty serious.

Minna steps aside, admitting Jack into the cluttered house.

INT. WIDOW'S FRONT HALL

Jack surveys the place, crowded with the accumulation of generations of the Shaw family. His eyes fall on Granny. He removes his sunglasses and hat.

JACK
Officer Wilkie, Ma'am.

GRANDMA
Pleased to meet you. Addie Larsen
(shakes his hand)
I'm glad you're here. I want you to arrest him.

JACK
Who?

GRANDMA
Spivey! He killed our chickens.

JACK
I thought this was about the oak tree.

GRANDMA
That, too, that lousy son of a...

MINNA
(chastising)
Grandma, Officer Wilkie needs to know that the gun went off accidentally.

GRANDMA
What? Oh yes. Of course.

She tries to charm Jack, going to him to touch his arm.

GRANDMA
You know, dear, I didn't even know it was loaded. Really, I didn't.

Jack goes to the door and picks up the gun. Minna follows him. He peruses the strange crowded space once more.

JACK.
Could you step outside a minute, Ma'am?

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT PORCH

Jack and Minna exit the front door. Spivey and the wood cutters stare from the end of the driveway.

JACK
You run a junk shop here?

MINNA
Junk shop?

JACK
You know, all that old stuff in there.

MINNA
No...No. Those are our things.

Jack nods, a little embarrassed.

JACK
I don't want to have to arrest your grandmother, but...

MINNA
What are you talking about?

JACK
Well she did take a shot at your neighbor. He's pretty upset.

MINNA
No she didn't. She was just trying to get his attention.

Jack rubs the back of his neck, pondering his next move.

JACK.
Well, I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt, Ma'am. But I think it would be a good idea if we keep this at the police station for the time being.

He picks up the shotgun.

JACK
Your Grandma have access to any other firearms?

Minna shakes her head: no.

JACK
Okay. I'll go speak to your neighbor, try to straighten this out.

He tips his hat to Minna and descends the porch steps. The bannister is wobbly under his hands. He stops and turns back.

JACK
Ought to get this fixed. Somebody might get hurt.

Minna nods and watches Jack go to Spivey, who is not happy. Spivey who points to the widow's house and making the "koo koo" sign, twirling his finger at the side of his head. He throws his hands up and motions to the wood cutters to get to work. Jack goes to his car, Minna hurries after him.

EXT. VEGETABLE STAND

Jack is about to close his car door when Minna calls out.

MINNA
Officer Wilkie!

Jack gets out of the car. Minna stops at the vegetable stand and takes a jar of apple butter. She approaches Jack.

MINNA
I just wanted to thank you. She's an old lady and...

JACK
No thanks necessary, Ma'am. The modern police officer is trained to resolve these conflicts. Just doing my job.

MINNA
Here, take this, anyway.

She hands him the jar.

JACK
We can't accept gifts, Ma'am.

He attempts to hand it back to her, but she won't take it.

MINNA
Oh, come on. It's just a jar of apple butter.

JACK
Sorry ma'am, it's the rules.

Jack goes to the stand to put the jar back, but sees the display ("apple butter $3.00") and reaches for his wallet. He puts money in the cigar box and slides the jar into his pocket.

MINNA
That wasn't necessary.

Jack tips his hat.

JACK
I'm sure it's delicious.

The sound of a chain saw breaks the silence, then stops as a branch falls to the ground.

JACK
That's a pity.

Minna drops her head and walks slowly toward her house. Jack departs.

Spivey observes Minna enter her house, then sneaks up to the vegetable stand and takes a jar of apple butter.

INT. SPIVEY KITCHEN

Jean Spivey enters the vast granite and stainless steel space and sees the APPLE BUTTER JAR on the counter. Spivey enters from a another doorway followed by a yapping Blitz.

JEAN
What's he so excited about?

SPIVEY
This.

Spivey holds up a mouse carcass by the tail.

SPIVEY
From the mouse trap I put in the garage.

Spivey goes to the jar and lays out the mouse. Jean watches Spivey spoon out apple butter to make room for the mouse.

SPIVEY
Another unpleasant surprise for our neighbor. Her business is about to have a downturn.

Spivey screws on the lid.

JEAN
Now what?

SPIVEY
Then put it back on her stand. You know how these small town people talk.
(he laughs diabolically)
Once somebody gets a hold of this...

EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF WIDOW'S HOUSE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

The oak tree is now gone. The school bus pulls up. Lucy and Owen exit and run across the road to their mother, who is dragging a tree limb away from the oak stump, where other remains of the tree are visible.

OWEN
Mom, what happened? Did you get Spivey?

MINNA
Well I didn't, but your Grandma almost got him. Took a shot at him.

OWEN
She did?

MINNA
Well, not really.

Minna chuckles, but Lucy just stares at her.

MINNA (cont'd)
What's the matter, Luce?

LUCY
It's not funny. Not Granny, Not Spivey. Not you. 'Specially not you.

MINNA
Lucy!

LUCY
The whole bus saw you today. It's bad enough I'm the girl with the dead dad. Now I'm the girl with the crazy mom, too.

MINNA
I was trying to save a tree...

Lucy kicks a branch.

LUCY
Nice job.

Lucy goes in the house.

OWEN
Why'd he cut the tree down?

MINNA
You wouldn't believe me if I told you. C'mon, give me a hand with this.

Owen stoops to grab a limb of the branch and discovers his rope swing. He holds it up mournfully.

MINNA (cont'd)
I'm sorry, sweetheart.

OWEN
We lose everything.

MINNA
No we don't sweetheart. We can hang it from another tree.

OWEN
(dropping the swing)
S'not the same.

EXT. WOOD PILE - BACK DOOR

Minna and Owen drag the branch and drop it by other branches.

EXT. VEGETABLE STAND - COVERED BRIDGE.

Jack's cruiser comes out of the bridge. It parks in front of the widow's. A small OAK SAPLING sticks out of the trunk.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY - A LITTLE LATER

Minna and Owen walk toward the oak stump. Owen spots the sapling standing in front of the arbor gate.

OWEN
Hey, look. What is that, mom?

Minna follows him to the tree. She takes a note held beneath the twine that wraps the root ball and reads:

MINNA
"Plant it today, you'll feel better.
Your local law enforcement officer, Jack Wilkie".

OWEN
Why'd he give us that, mom?

MINNA
I guess he likes trees, sweetheart.

EXT. END OF DRIVEWAY BY FALLEN OAK

Water spills from a hose at the base of the newly planted sapling, close to the giant stump of its predecessor.

Pulling back we see Minna, who holds a shovel. Owen is in the background at the house faucet.

MINNA
That's enough.

Owen turns off the faucet, and joins his mother. They gaze at the scrawny tree.

MINNA (cont'd)
Well, it will take a few hundred years.
C'mon let's get the rest of this wood.

Owen goes to the pile of tree limbs. As he starts to drag a branch off the pile he notices something.

OWEN
Mom, look!

Minna approaches, looking over Owen's shoulder into the leafy branches of tree debris.

MINNA
It looks like an old broom.

Owen yanks THE BROOM caught within gnarled tree branches.

MINNA (cont'd)
Don't Owen. It's already broken. See?

Minna points to the shaft, split a foot down from the top.

MINNA (cont'd)
Go to the barn and get my tool box.

INT. BARN

Owen enters and picks up a simple tool box.

EXT. WOOD PILE - BACK DOOR

Minna is seated on the back steps, using a pruning saw to make the final cut on the branches holding the Broom. It is freed. She gently moves the splintered tip.

MINNA
Hand me some twine.

Owen hands her a ball of twine from the tool box. She begins to whip the break, wrapping it tightly with twine.

MINNA
How was the Halloween party?

OWEN
Mr. Thomas took away my black spots.

MINNA
How come?

OWEN
He said I was scaring people.

MINNA
I thought that's what Halloween was for.

OWEN
Yeah, me too.

The repair completed, Minna stands, holding the Broom.

MINNA
There, good as new. Say, we haven't carved our pumpkin yet.

OWEN
I'll pick it out!

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN BEHIND WIDOW'S HOUSE

Owen's hands spread leaves to reveal two very small pumpkins. His mother stands beside him.

OWEN
These are runts, mom.

MINNA
I had to put the big ones out front.

INT. WIDOW's LIVINGROOM

Lucy is at a table with her school books, speaking to Granny. Minna enters from the kitchen, smoking a pipe.

LUCY
...just about died I was so embarrassed.

MINNA
Want to help carve the pumpkin?

LUCY
See, that's what I mean. Why does she have to smoke Dad's old pipe? How many of my friends have mother's walking around with a pipe stuck in their mouths.

MINNA
I just like the smell. Is there something wrong with that? It's not like somebody is going to see me.

LUCY
Exactly. You haven't left this place in years.

She gathers up her homework.

LUCY
Nobody ever sees you - just us.

She goes up the stairs.

GRANDMA
You know, Minna, she's got a point there. You look like Popeye for pity sake.

Minna puffs on her pipe, staring at Granny through the smoke.

INT. KITCHEN DUSK

Minna and Owen busy themselves at the newspaper covered table carving a pumpkin about the size of a soccer ball. Behind Owen and Minna, the Broom leans against the counter.

Grandma shuffles in and checks out the Broom. Suddenly, it straightens up. Granny jerks back. The Broom's shaft arches, then trembles and falls to the floor with a CLACK.

MINNA
What do you think of that, Grandma? It was stuck in the tree. Ever seen a broom like that?

GRANDMA
It's a lot like that one there.

She nods towards a similar OLD BROOM hung decoratively over the kitchen doorway.

GRANDMA
This one's different though.

MINNA
I know. The braiding is very unusual.

GRANDMA
That's because it's a Witch's Broom

Grandma opens the back door, and begins sliding the Broom across the floor with her foot. Lucy enters the room.

LUCY
Granny, what are you doing?

GRANDMA
Getting this thing out of here.

Minna rises. She goes to Granny and puts her arm around her.

MINNA
Why do you think this is a Witch's Broom?

GRANDMA
Saw it wiggling around.

Minna kneels and picks up the Broom.

GRANDMA
Ooo, Minna, don't touch it.

Minna goes to a kitchen closet and puts the Broom inside.

MINNA
What do you think? Is that okay?

Granny checks the old hammered iron door latch.

GRANDMA
I guess that will do.

Minna, eager to change the subject, returns to the table.

MINNA
Okay. Now, do we want a scary jack o' lantern, a happy one, a sad one or...

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

The pumpkin is carved and lit. Owen places it on the steps.

INT. WIDOW'S FRONT DOOR/HALL

Minna kneels, helping Owen with his coat. Lucy is behind her.

MINNA
Now, I don't want you dragging Granny to every house in Wicket. All that candy...

LUCY
(challenging)
Why don't you take him? Granny won't mind if you borrow her costume.

From a chair, she picks up a witch's hat and puts it on her mother's head.

LUCY
There. You're all set to go.

Minna gives her daughter an annoyed look, about to respond when she is interrupted by a loud scraping sound.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Minna and the children, at the doorway, watch Grandma pushing the table against the broom closet

GRANDMA
Heard that Broom moving around in there. Come here, Owen, give me a hand.

He goes to the table, but stops. He puts his head against the closet door. He jerks back.

OWEN
There is something in there.

MINNA
(stepping to closet)
It's probably just a mouse.

From the closet there is a clear "tap tap" sound. It is silent, then, "Crash!" - the sound of splintering wood. The TIP OF THE BROOM plunges right through the wooden panel of the door. Grandma pulls Owen to the corner of the room, Lucy stands at the doorway.

The tip of the Broom bends at a soft right angle. It rotates from left to right like a periscope. It straightens and extends itself, reaching down to undo the closet latch. It withdraws back into the closet.

The door swings open and The Broom shuffles out. Surveying its surroundings, its panning motion stops at the Widow, still in the witch's hat. It slides forward and its tip moves over Minna eagerly, like a sniffing dog. Minna steps backward. The Broom moves with her. The Widow inches back toward Lucy.

LUCY
(fearful)
Mom.

MINNA
(her eyes on the Broom)
Lucy, go open the front door.

Lucy opens the door. Minna turns and rushes out with the Broom trying to keep up.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - VEGETABLE STAND

Minna hurries down the steps. The Broom bounces down but trips at the bottom. The widow, surprised, stops. The Broom pulls itself up and starts hopping toward her.

She runs to the end of the driveway, hiding behind the vegetable stand. The Broom shuffles closer. Minna grabs APPLES, tossing them at the Broom, forcing it into the road.

A vehicle approaches from within the covered bridge. Its lights grow brighter, its sound louder. The Broom freaks out and hops into the woods as Spivey's SUV roars out and turns into the Spivey driveway, passing through the open gate.

Minna steps onto the road. The Broom disappears into the dark forest. She listens to it moving through the dried leaves, then walks up the driveway. Lucy, Grandma and Owen are gathered on the porch.

LUCY
Mom, what was that?

MINNA
I don't know. I...

GRANDMA
I told you. I told you what it was.
It's a witch's broom.

Owen is pressing eagerly against the porch railing.

OWEN
Where is it? Where'd it go?

MINNA
We better get inside. C'mon.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Granny pokes the fire as Minna peers out the window. Lucy and Owen are on the sofa.

LUCY
There aren't really witches, are there? You know, the kind with brooms?

GRANDMA
Well not anymore. But there used to be. A long time ago. Lots of them.

OWEN
What happened?

GRANDMA
I don't know. Guess they all died out.

OWEN
Like dinosaurs?

GRANDMA
(ponders - likes the idea)
Yes, Owen, like dinosaurs.

Minna continues to look out the window.

MINNA
Oh, Grandma, there were never any witches going around with pointy hats and brooms.

GRANDMA
Oh no? How do you think the lightning rod on the church got bent?

OWEN
Yeah mom, how about that?

MINNA
Oh Owen. That's just an old story people tell at Halloween. Nobody believes it.

GRANDMA
How about your ancestor, Arno Larsen? The man who built this house --

OWEN
--What about him?

GRANDMA
That night, that same Halloween night the witches flew around the church and bent the lightning rod, Arno Larsen walked out that door...
(points to door)
And got knocked over by two of them flying together on a Broom.

MINNA
That's a bunch of baloney. Two hundred and fifty year old baloney.

GRANDMA
Okay, then what was that just chased you out of the house?

Minna turns from the window. Her family looks at her.

MINNA
It was...it was a...it was a...

She turns back to the window.

MINNA
I don't know what it was.

OWEN
Mom, can we go out and look for him?

MINNA
No, Owen. No we can't.

OWEN
I don't know what you're all so worried about. I thought it was cool.

LUCY
Oh sure, I saw your face.

Lucy makes an exaggerated look of terror.

OWEN
Yeah, at first, but...

Minna turns to leave the room.

MINNA
I think we need to call the police.

LUCY
Mom you can't do that. You know what happens when people report stuff like that, like UFO's and little green guys?

OWEN
What happens?

LUCY
The whole world thinks you're a weirdo. We may as well walk around wearing t-shirts with "Nut Job" printed on them.

EXT. ROADSIDE

The Broom hops out of the woods and looks cautiously into the darkened covered bridge.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM

Minna tucks Owen into his four poster bed.

OWEN
Can we look for him? In the morning?

MINNA
I think your sister's got the right idea, Owen. Tomorrow we're gonna' wake up and pretend this never happened. We'll think of it as a dream, a dream we had together and we won't mention it to anyone.

OWEN
I'm not dreaming mom. I'm wide awake.

MINNA
And now it's time for you to go to sleep.

She gives him a kiss, turns off his bedside light and closes the door. He rearranges his pillow and opens the curtains at the foot of his bed to look out the window.

EXT. SHAW DRIVEWAY - LATER

The Broom shuffles up the driveway to the henhouse, sweeping. The house is dark.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM

Owen, on the edge of sleep, hears the sound of the Broom. He looks out the window, jumps out of bed excitedly.

INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM

Owen, holding a coil of rope, shakes a sleeping Lucy.

OWEN
Lucy, wake up. He's outside. I saw him!

LUCY
Just ignore it, maybe it'll go away.

INT. WIDOW'S HOUSE

Owen tiptoes down the stairs in his bathrobe and pajamas. Lucy, trailing behind, whispers after him impatiently.

LUCY
Owen, come back here.

EXT. BACK DOOR STOOP - WIDOW'S HOUSE

Owen exits the back door, followed by Lucy.

OWEN
He was over by the hen house.

EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

Unseen by them, the Broom shuffles around the corner of the house and back down the driveway, headed for the road.

The Broom reaches the end of the driveway as the Spivey boys approach on their bikes, holding their full trick or treat bags and wearing ghoul masks. The Broom stands still but "watches" them, rotating its bent shaft as they roll by.

RUSSELL
Hey, look at that!

DOUG, JR.
Cool!

They dismount their bikes and lift their masks to inspect the broom, amazed that it follows their every move.

DOUG, JR.
What a cool Halloween decoration.

RUSSELL
It must have some kind of electric eye.

Russell looks toward the darkened widow's house.

RUSSELL and DOUG, JR.
Let's take it.

He reaches out to grab the Broom and it raps him on the hand.

RUSSELL
Ouch!

He reaches out again.

EXT. HEN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY

Owen and Lucy, searching, hear Russel's exclamation. They see, at a distance, the Spivey boys and the Broom.

EXT. ROAD BY WIDOW'S

Russell self-pityingly rubs his knuckles.

DOUG, JR.
That's awesome! It must have some kind of little motors inside it.

Russell picks up a large branch from the fallen oak.

RUSSELL
Lets see what it's got inside.

Russell takes a swing and the Broom ducks. Enraged, he takes another swing and the Broom bends, causing him to miss again.

RUSSELL
Doug, you get a stick, too.

Doug, Jr. picks up a stick and they start circling the Broom.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY - CORNER OF HOUSE

Lucy and Owen watch as the Broom fences with both boys at once. They swing wildly. The Broom ducks, and Doug, Jr. clocks Russell. He drops to the ground, holding his arm.

RUSSELL
It hit me. It hit me.

Doug Jr. takes another swing. The Broom wraps its shaft around the stick. Doug, Jr. holds on as Russell gets to his feet, ready to club the Broom. The Broom yanks the stick from Doug, Jr. and the momentum swings the stick around and Russell gets whacked and goes down again.

The Spivey boys run up their driveway with the Broom hopping behind them holding the branch.

EXT. BETWEEN WIDOW'S AND SPIVEY'S DRIVEWAY

Owen and Lucy run to an opening in the bushes between the driveways. They see the Spivey boys run inside their house and the Broom approach the SUV that is parked out front.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

The Broom stops and rests the branch next to the SUV. It slides its tip along the contours of the vehicle, wrapping around a door handle, giving it progressively harder and harder pulls. The alarm goes off.

The Broom takes up the branch, goes to the hood of the car and begins to beat on it. The house's exterior lights turn on. The Broom drops the stick and takes off, leaping right over the bushes where Owen and Lucy are concealed.

Lucy and Owen watch the Broom sail over them and hop toward their own backyard. Owen runs after him.

LUCY
Owen!

INT. SPIVEY HOUSE - FRONT HALL

Spivey stands in his bathrobe holding a phone, looking out the window at his damaged vehicle, his sons just behind him.

SPIVEY
I want somebody out here. Now!

EXT. BACK OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

Lucy and Owen search for the Broom.

OWEN
I know he's somewhere...

LUCY
I'm not sure we want to find that thing.

They see Jack's Police cruiser race out of the covered bridge and up Spivey's driveway. The Broom jumps up from the tall grass and hops towards the hen house.

OWEN
There he goes!

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

Jack inspects the damage to the SUV as Spivey hovers behind him. Doug Jr. and Russell stand on the front door steps.

JACK
Boy, somebody really gave it a wallop.

DOUG, JR.
We know who did it. We saw it.

SPIVEY
Don't listen to them.

JACK
What'd they see?

SPIVEY
They got some crazy story about a ...

Doug, Jr and Russell approach.

RUSSELL
It was a broom.

JACK
You mean somebody used a broom to...

DOUG, JR.
No, it was just this big Broom holding a stick and...

RUSSELL
He hit us too, down by the...

SPIVEY
(impatiently)
O.K. That's enough of your stupid fairy tales. You boys get inside.

Doug Jr. and Russell go inside.

JACK
Boys've got some imagination.

SPIVEY
I want to know who did this. Wouldn't be surprised if it was that woman next door.

JACK
It's Halloween. Mr. Spivey, these things happen, even out here in the country. Probably just some teenagers with nothing better to do.

Spivey grunts. Dissatisfied, he turns and walks to his door.

EXT. BACK OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

Owen approaches a shaft leaning against the hen house, its base hidden in the grass. He reaches out and grabs - a rake.

LUCY
There he goes!

The Broom hops toward the barn.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Owen and Lucy stand outside the Barn, peering in through a slightly open sliding door, into the blackness.

INT. WIDOW'S BARN

The Broom stands right on the other side of the door.

LUCY
You're sure he's in here?

OWEN
I saw him go in.

LUCY
I'm not going in. You go in.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

Jack is about to get in his cruiser when he hears Lucy, off-screen, faintly, "C'mon Owen, push!"

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Lucy and Owen fuss with the rusty latch on the barn door. Jack approaches, holding a flashlight. Owen and Lucy freeze. Jack shines his flashlight on them.

JACK
You kids live here?

They nod.

JACK
Pretty late, isn't it?
What you doing out here?

LUCY
Oh, we were...we were...

OWEN
Checking on our new puppy.

The large barn door shakes in its tracks.

JACK
Big fellow, hey?

MINNA (O.S.)
Owen? Lucy!?

Jack, Owen and Lucy turn to see Minna descend the back steps, carrying a lantern. Her hair is down. She looks bewitching. A breeze off the river rustles her long bathrobe.

JACK
Evening, Ma'am.

MINNA
What's going on?

JACK
No need to be alarmed. I was checking on a disturbance next door...

MINNA
A disturbance?

JACK
It was nothing, really. Just a little Halloween mischief. I was looking around, saw your kids...

MINNA
(sternly to Owen and Lucy)
They shouldn't be out here.

JACK
Don't be too hard on them. I remember what it was like having a new puppy.

He smiles at Owen and ruffles the boy's hair. The radio in Jack's cruiser can be heard faintly, off-screen.

JACK
Well, you folks have a good night, now.

He tips his hat and trots away. Minna eyes her children.

MINNA
You were out here looking for that thing.

Stubborn silence from Owen and Lucy.

She leads the children up the back steps.

MINNA
And you told him you were looking for your puppy?

Her children look at her innocently.

MINNA
Some puppy.

EXT. SUNRISE SHAW FARM, SEEN FROM THE RIVER

The fading disc of a full moon is still visible.

EXT. SUNRISE SHAW HOUSE

Owen and Lucy exit the house, being careful not to slam the door. Owen holds the coiled rope.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Lucy and Owen look with dismay at the open barn door, the rusty latch, now bent and hanging by a screw.

LUCY
Now what?

EXT. SHAW PROPERTY - A FIELD BY THE WOODS

Owen and Lucy move along looking into the early-morning shadows of the forest.

LUCY
I still think he's over by the road.

OWEN
Shh. I'm sure those were his tracks by the driveway. He came up this...

Within the woods, The Broom peeks out from behind a tree. It watches Lucy and Owen. It moves away from the tree.

LUCY
Look, Owen!

OWEN
I see. I see.

The broom takes an enormous kangaroo hop, out of the woods, landing close to the children. Lucy steps towards it. The Broom follows her with its shaft, like a cobra following the instrument of a snake charmer.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Minna is at the stove frying eggs. Grandma sets the table.

MINNA
Boy, they sure are quiet this morning.

Granny goes to the bottom of the stairs.

GRANDMA
Owen! Lucy!! Breakfast!

Granny steps back into the kitchen.

MINNA
Are they...

Out the window, She spots Owen, Lucy and the Broom.

EXT. FIELD BY WOODS

Lucy extends her arm. The Broom slowly approaches. Owen circles behind the Broom, holding the loop on his rope.

He slips the loop around the shaft and pulls it tight. The Broom lowers its shaft and violently shakes it back and forth. Owen holds on tight and is yanked around.

The rope slides up, but catches on the repair that Minna made. The broom straightens and spins, coiling the rope on its shaft, ripping it from Owen's hands. It takes a couple big hops into the woods. A moment later, the coiled rope comes flying out.

MINNA (O.S.)
Owen! Lucy!

They turn to see their mother running across the field, her apron flapping in the wind.

WITHIN THE FOREST'S EDGE

We see the Broom leaning over to peek out from behind a tree again. When it sees Minna, it peers around even more eagerly. Minna arrives, out of breath.

MINNA
You should not have come...

The Broom hops back into the field. Minna pushes the children along in front of her.

MINNA (cont'd)
All right into the house, now.

OWEN
But mom...

MINNA
I'm serious. Inside!

They hurry across the field. Turning back, they see the Broom following them. They speed up and so does the Broom. By time they reach the house they are running full speed.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Owen Lucy and Minna enter.

OWEN
He's back, Granny! We found him!

Minna closes and bolts the door. Grandma joins them and they gather at the window as the Broom draws close to the house.

EXT. THE WIDOW'S BACKYARD

Scattered around the back door are the remains of the oak tree. Some wood, already split, is stacked by the door. An AX is lodged in an upturned piece of wood.

The Broom surveys the scene. It wraps its shaft around the handle and yanks the ax free of the log.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Lucy, Owen and Grandma continue to watch the Broom. Minna goes to the living room and returns with the fireplace poker.

MINNA
Get away from the window.

LUCY
Mom. Come here, look.

In the backyard, the Broom is splitting wood. It upends a section of a log with its shaft then takes the ax and brings it swiftly down on the log, splitting it cleanly.

OWEN
He's helping us out, mom.

Putting down the ax, the Broom stands upright and "nods" to the Shaws. Owen taps on the glass in response.

OWEN (cont'd)
He's not going to hurt us. He likes us.

Owen watches as the Broom approaches and taps on the door. Owen goes to open it. Minna's hands tighten on the poker.

MINNA
Owen, stay away from that door.

Lucy is still at the window.

LUCY
Uh oh.

OWEN
What?

EXT. BACK DOOR - WOOD PILE

BLITZ approaches, growling viciously. The Broom moves away from the door. The dog backs into a corner formed by the woodpile and the house and attacks the Broom.

Owen charges outside. Minna, Lucy and Granny follow,

MINNA
Owen!

The dog has the Broom by the bristles. Though strong, the Broom is "anatomically" incapable of bending its shaft close enough to its own bristles to defend itself. It futilely swings at the dog, then tries to hop away, but is jerked around by the vicious animal. Owen runs to the combatants.

OWEN
Leave him alone!

The dog continues attacking the Broom. The Broom, backed against the wood pile, grabs the AX. He swings it wildly, just missing Owen, then brings it down sharply, lodging the ax in a piece of wood just behind the dog.

Blitz runs off yelping. Owen and Minna stare at the ax. Next to the blade lies a two inch section of DOG TAIL. Minna pulls Owen to her, but he resists, looking at the Broom.

OWEN
Mom, he's hurt.

Broom bristles lie scattered around the ground.

MINNA
It's dangerous, Owen. That's what it is.

OWEN
But...he...

MINNA
Owen, It's not a "he"...it's a thing. It can't think. It's a vicious wild thing.

The Broom, with many bristles missing, moves toward them crookedly, losing more bristles. Minna draws Owen closer.

The Broom falls over and drags itself toward them, planting its shaft tip and pulling itself forward like a worm. It curves its shaft and drags the tip through the dirt, spelling out "S O R R Y". Then it drops flat, motionless.

Granny and Lucy hesitantly approach.

GRANDMA
What is it. What's it say?

MINNA
"Sorry".

A breeze off the river and scatters the bristles. The Shaws gather round the lifeless shaft.

OWEN
He wasn't a "thing".

MINNA
No sweetheart, I guess he wasn't.

GRANDMA
Well, that's the end of him. Too bad.

MINNA
You're the one who said it was a witch's broom.

GRANDMA
It was... But it was magic, real magic.

LUCY
We could have used a little magic around here.

Owen begins to sniffle. Lucy puts her arm around him.

OWEN
We lose everything. Everything dies.

Minna gazes at her family grieving over the lifeless Broom.

MINNA
No we don't. We don't lose everything. Lucy, you and Owen get after these bristles. Lets work some magic of our own.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN - DUSK

Minna's hands rebraid the twine that held the bristles, most of which are back in place. We pull back to see the Broom lying between Minna and Granny on the kitchen table. Granny's hand rests on the shaft, Minna is puffing on her pipe. The children enter clutching a few broom bristles.

LUCY
We couldn't find anymore. Did he move?

Minna, concentrates, working the bristles into the Broom.

MINNA
You know, this might not work.

LUCY
Yeah. And if it does you can't go telling your friends and showing off.

OWEN
What friends?

LUCY
You know what I mean.

MINNA
She's right, Owen. Something like this is...well, it's just too strange. It's the kind of thing people would want to take away and...

Minna pauses, absorbed in her work.

OWEN
And what?

GRANDMA
Cut it up. See what's inside. Nobody believes in magic anymore.

OWEN
I do.

MINNA
Well, if we want to keep him, we can't let anybody...

Granny jerks her hand away from the Broom.

GRANDMA
He moved! I felt something.

They all gather close around the Broom, tentatively poking him. There is no sign of life.

MINNA
There are still a few bristles missing. Granny, check over by the garden.

Granny, takes a lantern and exits with Owen and Lucy. The door latch doesn't catch. It swings open. As Minna rises to close it, the Broom moves. She picks it up and tries to get it to stand.

MINNA
Come on, you can do it.

It falls over. As Minna bends to pick it up, her pipe clenched between her teeth, Jack leans in through the open back door and knocks on the door frame.

JACK
Hello.

Minna rises and turns.

MINNA
Oh, hello. You surprised me.

Jack steps in. He is in his "civvies" - khaki pants, wind breaker, plaid shirt and baseball cap.

JACK
Didn't mean to startle you.
(shyly, tongue tied)
I saw the lights on back here and...I was looking for some more of that apple butter out front. Didn't see any, so...

Minna self-consciously places her pipe on the table. The Broom's shaft lifts slightly off the floor, unseen by Jack, and lowers, grazing the back of Minna's ankle.

MINNA
Ohhhh. Oh, sure. Got some right here.

Minna goes to the pantry and lifts a box.

JACK
Let me help you.

Jack takes the box and sets it on the counter.

MINNA
One?

JACK
How about three, uh...Minna.

She is distracted, trying to keep an eye on the Broom, lying motionless just behind Jack.

MINNA
You must eat a lot of toast.

JACK
Sure do, when I've got something as tasty as this to put on it.

Minna takes a the jars from the box and puts them in a bag. Behind Jack, she watches the Broom pulling itself across the floor to a chair.

JACK
You know, I was wondering if...

Jack reaches for his wallet and tries to act casual. The Broom pulls itself up using the chair, then leans against the refrigerator. Its drooping shaft pulls up straight.

JACK
...you might like to... sometime...grab a bite or...?

The Broom is wobbling toward Jack like a tipsy drunk.

MINNA
You mean dinner?

Minna strides by Jack, picks up the Broom, and sets it by the refrigerator.

JACK
Well yeah. Just an idea, but...

MINNA
How about tonight?

JACK
Tonight? Gee, sure, I guess...

Minna goes to the back door and grabs a sweater off a hook.

MINNA
Ready?

JACK
Uh, okay, sure.

He goes to pick up his apple butter and picks up the box as well.

JACK
Want this out front? You're all out.

EXT. BACK OF WIDOW'S

Jack stands at the edge of the garden as Minna goes to Granny, who holds a lantern, while Lucy and Owen kneel. He observes an excited outburst on the part of the children.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY - VEGETABLE STAND

Minna and Jack walk toward Jack's pick-up truck parked by the vegetable stand.

JACK
Still got things in your garden?

MINNA
Oh, just some small pumpkins.

JACK
It's good to see kids pitching in like that, working out there after dark.

MINNA
Yeah, they're good kids. Listen, I want to thank you for the little oak.

JACK
Ah, don't mention it. I was out by Windy Hill Nursery and so...

MINNA
Well, it was very thoughtful.

JACK
You plant it?

MINNA
Right here.

She points out the tree at the end of the drive.

JACK
Well, gonna' take a while.

They stop at the vegetable stand. Minna takes the jars out of the box Jack holds and restocks the shelf.

JACK
Looks like you sell a lot of this.

MINNA
My claim to fame.

Jack helps Minna in to his truck. As they drive away the Spivey boys sneak out of the shadow and approach the vegetable stand.

RUSSELL
Got it?

Doug, Jr. hands him the MOUSE-CONTAMINATED JAR.

DOUG, JR.
Dad said put it somewhere in the back.

Russell places the jar amongst the others on the stand.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Grandma and the kids look closely at the Broom's shaft.

LUCY
You might be right, Grandma. He's not moving at all now.

GRANDMA
Well, he was pretty old. Maybe that dogfight used up what was left of him.

OWEN
He's just sleeping. Look.

Owen points to the shaft, which is moving very slightly back and forth with the rhythm of respiration. He opens a kitchen cabinet and takes two large pan lids out of the cabinet.

LUCY
Owen, what are you doing?

Owen goes to the Broom and bangs the lids together. Clang! The Broom straightens and stiffens, spinning like a top. Then it takes off like a rocket, right into the ceiling. He's stuck, his bristle-end flailing about wildly.

EXT. EDGE OF SPIVEY PROPERTY

Doug Spivey and his sons are out looking for Blitz.

RUSSELL
Here Blitz, come here boy.

DOUG, JR.
Blitzey, here Blitzey.

EXT. PARKING LOT - ROADSIDE TAVERN

Jack's truck pulls into the lot of a cozy tavern. He jumps out and goes to the passenger-side door.

JACK
I hope this is okay.

MINNA
It's fine. We...I used to come here a lot

JACK
You sure? We could go someplace else.

MINNA
No. A bowl of chili would be good. They used to have really great chili here.

JACK
Still do.

INT. TAVERN

Jack and Minna slide into a booth. At a pool table, wedged into an alcove near the front door, are the WOOD-CUTTERS.

DARYL
Hey, look over there. I don't believe what I'm seeing.

Wayne whacks a ball into a pocket and looks up.

WAYNE
Is that the Widow Shaw?

CHUCK
Yeah, with Jack. Musta' put her under arrest, to get her out of that house.

DARRYL
You know, I shoulda asked her out myself.

WAYNE
When she had the headlock on you, that was the perfect opportunity.

They laugh. Minna's seat faces the pool table. The laughter catches her attention and when she looks at them, DARRYL thumbs his nose and shadow boxes.

There is more laughter from the wood cutters and Minna looks away. Jack turns to look at the wood cutters who resume their pool game.

JACK
You sure this is okay?

MINNA
It's all right.

An inebriated Chuck approaches the booth.

CHUCK
Hiya, Minna. Hey, Darryl over there says he wants to go a few more rounds with you. I think he kinda liked it when you wrapped your arm around his neck...

Chuck is modeling a head-lock.

JACK
Why don't you go back to your game?

CHUCK
...squeezed him up against your...

JACK
I said, go back to your game, Chuck.

The commanding authority in Jack's voice gets Chuck's attention. He retreats.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Grandma is on a chair trying to get a hold of the Broom's bristles which continue to flail around.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM

Upstairs the children try to get a hold of the shaft.

OWEN
I'm sorry. We're going to get you out.

LUCY
Why doesn't he stop doing that?

OWEN
I bet he's scared. 'Cause he think he's trapped like in that tree.
(to the Broom)
It's O.K. We'll get you out.

Slowly the Broom stops its wild gyrations. Owen and Lucy take a hold of the shaft and push down. Lucy calls out.

LUCY
O.K. Granny, pull!

EXT. EDGE OF SPIVEY PROPERTY

The Spivey boys, distressed, kneel by their dog as Doug Spivey inspects the dog's tail.

SPIVEY
No, Russell, that is definitely not an animal bite.

He rises and looks malevolently towards the Shaw house.

SPIVEY
Boys, it appears the enemy has returned fire. Take Blitz inside.

INT. TAVERN

Minna and Jack chat in their tavern booth. Jack is working hard at making a good impression. Minna is working hard at remembering how to make casual conversation.

MINNA
When did you get out?

JACK
Last summer.

MINNA
Did you like the army?

JACK
You know, I did. People think if someone likes rules and regulations something is wrong with them. Didn't bother me. I like the feeling of having things all lined up, something to do from sun up to sun down. It agrees with me.

MINNA
(drolly)
Yeah, me, too.

Jack gives Minna a look. Not sure he's being made fun of.

JACK
Loved the jumping, too.

MINNA
Jumping?

JACK
I was a paratrooper.

MINNA
Really? What was that like?

JACK
Like nothing else. You know, the only hard part is taking that leap. Once you're out of the plane...Well, it's pretty great.

MINNA
Why didn't you stay in?

JACK
Reverend Peters wrote me about the county looking for new troopers. Sounded good.

MINNA
Oh, you know Reverend Peters?

JACK
He was my Sunday School teacher. I grew up here, went to Wicket High.

The waitress, PAULA, approaches with their food. She is a large matronly type in her late forties.

PAULA
Two chili's.

JACK
Thanks, Paula.

Paula serves the order.

PAULA
So how those kids doing, now? Lucy and...

MINNA
Owen. Fine, they're fine.

PAULA
Well, it's sure good to see you in here. Don't wait so long next time. We've missed you.
(to Jack)

PAULA (cont'd)
You bring her back, soon, you hear? That's an order.

JACK
Yes, Ma'am.

Paula laughs, pats Jack on the back and leaves.

MINNA
So you went to Wicket High? I don't remember you.

JACK
Oh, I remember you. Homecoming Queen, class of...
(he calculates)
1984. We had front row seats at the game. You drove by in this red convertible, sitting on the back wearing a crown. I remember, I asked my dad, "Is she a real queen?"

MINNA
A real queen?

JACK
Yeah, like from a fairy tale.
(seeing Minna's puzzled look)
Well, I was only six.

Minna lowers her head and chuckles quietly

JACK
What?

MINNA
I was just remembering sitting on that car, people clapping and cheering. Such a long time ago. Nobodyd mistake me for a real queen these days.

JACK
Gee, you could fool me.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Plaster fragments are being swept into a dust pan and as we pull back we see the Broom is doing the sweeping as Lucy holds the dust pan. Owen watches. Granny gazes up at the hole in the ceiling.

GRANDMA
He's got some spunk, alright. I think he's going to be just fine.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
(taking the dust pan from Lucy)
You kids better get ready for bed.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Lucy and Owen in pajamas ascend the stairs. Granny tends the fire. The Broom lays on the sofa with its "head" on a tiny pillow.

INT. WIDOW'S UPSTAIR'S HALL

Owen and Lucy stop at their mother's empty room and look in.

LUCY
Isn't it amazing?

OWEN
Sure is. I wonder what else he can do?

LUCY
I'm not talking about the Broom, Owen.

OWEN
Huh?

LUCY
I'm talking about mom. She's gone, she's out. Like a regular person.

Owen looks at his mother's empty room and slowly nods.

OWEN
Yeah, yeah. That is amazing.

LUCY
I remember when mom and dad used to go out. Sometimes when they came home they turned the radio on really quiet. They didn't know I was awake. I would sneak down and watch them dance.

They proceed to their rooms, Lucy continues.

LUCY
Once daddy saw me, I thought he was going to be mad. He called me down from the stairs, then he and mom just picked me up and we all danced together.

INT. TAVERN - MINNA'S AND JACK'S TABLE

Minna takes the last gulp from a mug of beer, smiling.

MINNA
No, I can't. Really, I don't remember,

JACK
Sure you do. We sang it every game.

Jack hums a march. He does it slowly, and it has a slightly plaintive sound. Minna, hesitantly joins in singing.

MINNA
'Cause we are the Wicket Warriors...
Champions of the...

Jack stops humming and joins in.

JACK AND MINNA
...The hard wood floors... Champions of the great outdoors... On the field or in the gym... Wicket's Warriors always win. Hail, hail, the valiant Warriors, Victory is our name".

They finish the song. Minna looks down sheepishly.

JACK
See, I knew you'd remember.

Paula approaches.

PAULA
You folks want dessert?

EXT. BETWEEN SHAW AND SPIVEY PROPERTY

Spivey pushes through the vegetation separating the properties and heads toward the Shaw's barn.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Next to the barn sits the widow's tractor, aimed downhill toward the river. Spivey climbs aboard. He wrestles with the shift lever, then dismounts, picks up a rock, and starts banging on the lever.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Grandma is asleep. Owen tiptoes in with a blanket and makes a bed next to the sofa. The sound of clanging metal comes from outside. The Broom lifts its head. Another clang and it rises.

OWEN
Did you hear that, too?

Owen goes to the back door followed by the Broom. They hear another clang.

OWEN
C'mon, let's check it out.

The Broom goes to the back door.

EXT. WIDOW'S BACK DOOR STOOP - BACK YARD

We see Owen come down the back steps and move to through the tall grass hunched over. The Broom is right behind him.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Spivey continues to beat on the tractor. On the other side of the barn, Owen and the Broom peek around, watching him.

The Broom hops out, but Owen holds back, frightened by the hulking and agitated Spivey. The Broom sneaks up and taps Spivey on the shoulder.

Spivey looks around. The Broom balances stiffly, upright. Spivey is puzzled. He pokes it with a finger and it falls over. Then he picks it up, looks at it closely, and tosses it into the brush. He turns back to put his weight into the tractor.

The Broom sneaks up and taps him on the shoulder again. Spivey spins around, but now the Broom is lying low in the tall grass. Spivey spots Owen at the corner of the barn.

SPIVEY
What are you doing there?

Owen steps out, bravely.

OWEN
What are you doing?

Spivey approaches the boy, menacingly.

SPIVEY
You want to know what I'm doing? I'll tell you what I'm doing.

He moves closer to Owen.

SPIVEY
(repressed rage)
I'm looking for my dog's tail.

He moves still closer. Owen stands his ground. Spivey grabs the boy's shoulder and puts his face close to Owen's.

SPIVEY
(indicates with his fingers)
About this long. Seen it around?

Behind Spivey, the Broom sets up, taking a few practice swings like a batter at the plate. Then he lets fly, whacking Spivey so hard across the buttocks he lifts off the ground. Spivey howls and twists around. The Broom rises out of the tall grass and drums on Spivey's forehead, like a Three Stooges routine. Spivey covers himself and runs off as the Broom delivers a few parting shots. He hops to Owen

OWEN
C'mon, we better get inside.

EXT. TAVERN PARKING LOT - JACK'S TRUCK

Jack holds the door open for Minna.

PAULA (O.S.)
Jack! Jack!

Jack looks toward the restaurant door where Paula stands holding his hat. Jacks's hands go to his head,

JACK
Oops. Be right back.

He closes the door and walks back to Paula.

PAULA
Gotta' sew this thing to your head.

JACK
(taking the hat)
Guess so.

PAULA
You know, she's had kind of a rough time the last few years.

JACK
Yeah, I heard.

PAULA
Okay. I just...

JACK
What?

PAULA
A woman like Minna might need a little extra ...ah..understanding.

JACK
(good naturedly)
I can do that.

PAULA
I'm sure you can.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY - FRONT OF HOUSE

Jack's pick-up truck pulls in. Jack goes around and opens Minna's door. They walk to the arbor gate.

JACK
C'mon. Everybody goes to the Harvest Dance.

MINNA
I haven't gone for the last few years.

JACK
Not exactly my cup of tea either... We wouldn't have to dance.

MINNA
Why not?

Jack is caught a little off balance.

JACK
Well, I mean, we could if you wanted, I'm just not very good at it.

MINNA
(smiling)
Listen Jack, that's not the kind of thing you tell a woman you're trying to get to a dance.

JACK
(laughing at himself)
Guess you're right.

They proceed up to the porch steps.

MINNA
Well, thank you for dinner.

JACK
Thanks for coming. If you'd like to go back there sometime, just give me a call.

MINNA
Oh, I will. 911. Woman needs chili.

JACK
Seriously, anytime. You and the kids, your Grandma, too.

MINNA
(extending her hand)
That's nice, Jack, but we don't go out much.

They shake hands. Minna turns and ascends to the porch. Jack looks up and leans against the wobbly porch bannister.

JACK
You know, you really ought to...

The bannister lets go. Jack tumbles backward, dropping four feet down and out of sight into the giant rhododendron beside the stairs. Minna spins around.

MINNA
Jack?!

She goes down the stairs. Jack crawls out from the giant rhododendron.

JACK
I'm fine. I'm fine.

A branch has gotten stuck in the collar of his jacket. The leaves stick out from the sides of his head, creating the appearance of enormous ears. Minna covers her mouth to stifle laughter.

MINNA
(through suppressed laughter)
I'm sorry.

JACK
What's so funny?

He notices the branch, removes it and starts laughing himself. He leans over to dust himself off.

JACK
I've heard of falling hard for a girl before, but jeez...

He stands and gives Minna a smile. It's clear she is charmed. She looks down awkwardly at the ground, notices Jack's hat, and picks it up.

JACK
If you think falling off a porch is funny, you don't want to miss seeing me on the dance floor.

MINNA
(laughing again)
All right, Officer Wilkie. Tomorrow. Seven o'clock, home by nine.

Minna puts Jack's hat on his head and gives him a kiss on the cheek.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Minna enters and awakens sleeping Grandma.

GRANDMA
Must have dozed off.

Granny gets up and pokes around the sofa. It's empty. She looks around the room.

GRANDMA
Must be around here somewhere.

MINNA
What?

GRANDMA
That Broom!

MINNA
(hand goes to forehead)
Oh my God. I completely forgot about that thing.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY

Jack is backing out of the driveway when a crazed looking Spivey stumbles out of the shadows. His head is bandaged and he carries a chain saw Jack stops and gets out of his truck.

JACK
Mr. Spivey, are you alright?

SPIVEY
It's here. I saw it. It attacked me.

JACK
What are you talking about?

SPIVEY
The Broom, you fool. My boys were telling the truth. There's a broom around here. A witch's Broom...
(motions to the widow's house)
And it belongs to that woman.

JACK
I know you and Mrs. Shaw have some problems with each other, but spreading crazy rumors isn't going to help the situation. We aren't a bunch of superstitious hillbillies around here.

SPIVEY
Oh yeah? I've heard those stories about the lightning rod on the church.

JACK
That's all they are, Mr. Spivey, stories.

SPIVEY
What if they're not? What if some of those witches settled down here? Ever think about that?

JACK
Get a grip on yourself, man.

SPIVEY
Listen to me. I saw the thing. Up by the barn. C'mon, I'll show you.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM

Owen is asleep. The Broom is next to him, its "head" also on the pillow. Granny and Minna look at the immobile shaft.

MINNA
Is it asleep?

GRANDMA
I guess so.

MINNA
I don't think he should be sleeping with this thing.

Granny nods in agreement. She lifts the covers and slides her hands beneath the broom and picks it up. It is limp and drapes across her hands like a wet noodle.

GRANDMA
Yeah, he's asleep.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Spivey is leading Jack through some tall grass.

SPIVEY
It was right around here. I wouldn't be surprised if the thing is still...

Boing! Spivey steps on an old rake and it hits him on the face. He leaps back and pulls on the chain saw cord. Jack picks up the rake, and hands it to Spivey.

JACK
Well, here is your witch's broom.

He turns and walks back towards his truck, chuckling.

SPIVEY
Wait a minute. This isn't it. It was a broom. A real witch's broom.

JACK
Get some sleep. Mr. Spivey. Things will look clearer in the morning.

INT. SHAW'S LIVINGROOM

Kneeling by the sofa, Granny and Minna tuck in the Broom.

GRANDMA
Where'd you and the young man go?

MINNA
Over to the roadhouse.

GRANDMA
Well, how'd it feel, being out and all.

Minna shrugs her shoulders, but the smile on her face tells Grandma what she wants to know.

GRANDMA
I bet you had a fine time.

Minna continues to smile and Grandma nudges her with her elbow.

GRANDMA
Come on...

MINNA
It was OK.

GRANDMA
Just OK?

MINNA
What's wrong with OK?

EXT. WIDOW'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

It is early morning.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Owen tiptoes down the stairs.

OWEN
Broom? Broom?

He goes to the sofa and pulls back the covers - empty.

OWEN
Broom!?

Owen looks around the room, panic stricken.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Owen runs in. The back door is open. He goes to it and spies the Broom in the vegetable garden.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN

The Broom pokes around the garden. Owen approaches.

OWEN
What're you doing out here?

The Broom hops over to the pumpkin patch and bends over, giving the runt pumpkin we'd seen earlier a nudge.

OWEN
Yeah?

The Broom leans over and spells out in the dirt, as Owen reads aloud:

OWEN
"FIX IT I WILL"? What do you mean?

The Broom goes and picks up a wooden bucket, then hops off toward the woods, bordering the Widow's property.

OWEN
Wait for me.

EXT. WOODS - BEHIND WIDOW'S HOUSE

The Broom's shaft knocks a piece of fungus off a tree.

OWEN
This, too?

The Broom nods. Owen tosses it into the bucket that he now holds, filled with other fungi and berries.

The Broom moves slowly through the woods, with its head to the ground like a hound on the scent, plowing through falling leaves. He stops, evidently tugging on something with great effort. At last, his tip comes arching up out of the leaves, grasping a strange looking tuber. Owen looks at it as it lands in the bucket.

OWEN (cont'd)
Ick.

INT. WIDOW'S BEDROOM - LATER

Minna sits in bed, addressing her open closet.

MINNA
Oh, Lucy, don't make such a big deal about it.

Lucy emerges from the closet, holding a handful of dresses and skirts and drops them on the bed.

LUCY
Make a big deal about?! Mom, you're going to a dance. We've got to make sure you look...

Lucy sniffs the air.

LUCY
Do you smell something? What is that?

INT. LIVING ROOM

Minna and Lucy descend the stairs. Owen and the Broom are at the fireplace. A steaming iron kettle hangs from a metal arm over the fire. The Broom wears a hot pad mitten on its shaft.

MINNA
What is that smell?

The Broom turns, moves his tip in friendly acknowledgement. With the mitten on, it looks like he is waving.

LUCY
That stinks!

OWEN
He's making a potion with roots and berries and... other stuff.

Minna and Lucy approach the fireplace. The concoction is about to boil over. The Broom swings out the hinged arm, removes the kettle and places it on the hearth. He flips the mitten off, then plunges his shaft into the hot brew. Sparks fly from the liquid. Bubbles rise up.

LUCY
What's he doing?

Owen shrugs his shoulders. The Broom withdraws his shaft and Owen dries him off with a towel. He looks into the brew.

OWEN
Is it done?

The Broom nods, "yes".

MINNA
It better be. You've got to get that smelly stuff out of here.

Owen hands Lucy a hot pad mitten. Together they carry the potion to the back door.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

The Broom is about to follow the children out.

MINNA
(to the Broom)
Wait a minute, you can't go out.

She closes the door before the Broom can exit.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN

Owen and Lucy carry the potion.

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

Spivey stands at the window looking through binoculars. Jean is behind him.

SPIVEY
It's just those kids.

JEAN
This is crazy. We're going to be late for church.

SPIVEY
I don't think you appreciate what we're dealing with here, Jean. That woman cut off our dog's tail. Why? I'll tell you why. To make some spell, some potion, to bring that thing to life.

JEAN
(mocking him)
Her magic Broom?

SPIVEY
I know what I saw out there.

JEAN
Doug, do me a favor. Don't go around repeating that. Okay? Anybody'd think you'd lost your mind.

Doug Jr. and Russell, who carries a video camera, enter.

RUSSELL
Found it, dad.

He hands the camera to his father.

SPIVEY
(to Jean)
Lost my mind, eh? You'll see. I'm going to prove it. Everyone's going to see.

He opens the video screen and it falls off.

DOUG, JR.
Me and Russell were making a movie.

SPIVEY
Damn it! You kids break everything.

JEAN
Calm down, Doug. We can go by the mall after church.

EXT. WIDOW'S VEGETABLE GARDEN

Lucy and Owen sit on a bench in the garden staring down at the runt pumpkin. The iron cauldron is next to them.

LUCY
What do you think it's supposed to do?

OWEN
"Fix it", whatever that means.

LUCY
Maybe it needs more.

They pour more of the cauldron's contents onto the pumpkin. Granny calls them to breakfast from the back door. They go to the house, observing the Spivey's noisy departure.

INT. SPIVEY SUV

The Spivey's roll by the widow's house to the covered bridge. Spivey gives the house the evil eye.

SPIVEY
She's history. Hear me, Jean? History!

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Owen and Lucy exit out the back door as Minna and Granny wash dishes at the sink.

OWEN
We're going to see if anything happened yet.

Some plates remain on the table. The Broom encircles his shaft beneath one and flips it up spinning the dish on its tip. It shuffles toward the sink, unnoticed by Granny and Minna who look out at the children.

MINNA
Don't they need to get ready for church?

GRANDMA
Aw, I think we'll skip it today.

Behind them the Broom loses control of the plate. It falls. The Broom sticks its bristles out and bounces the plate up, gets its shaft underneath it, balancing the plate on its edge. It dips the shaft down, rolling the plate toward the tip. It lifts its shaft back up with the plate now rotating upright. Granny turns, and takes the plate.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Don't try that with the good china.

EXT. WIDOW'S VEGETABLE GARDEN

Minna approaches Lucy who is sitting by herself, still studying the pumpkin.

MINNA
Where is your brother?

Lucy points down the driveway where Minna sees Owen walking toward them with the empty cauldron.

LUCY
He poured the rest of it out down there.

Owen carries the cauldron up and drops it at their feet.

OWEN
Mom, do we have to go to church?

MINNA
Not today. I need your help in the orchard. We're almost out of cider.

OWEN
Can the Broom come with us?

LUCY
We saw the Spiveys go out.

OWEN
We'll be really careful.

EXT. CHURCH

We hear choir music comes to a conclusion.

EXT. CHURCH ENTRY

The doors of the church open and the Reverend stands outside to meet and greet. Doug Spivey approaches with his bandaged forehead and family in tow.

JEAN
(whispering)
Doug, don't say anything foolish.

Rev. Peters takes Spivey's hand looking at his wound sympathetically.

REVEREND PETERS
Good gracious, what happened to you?

SPIVEY
I think you'll be very interested in what happened to me last night. Very interested indeed, Reverend. In fact, I think all of Wicket will be interested.

The Reverend shows, obsequiously, intense curiosity.

REVEREND PETERS
Really, Doug? Tell me?

Jean gives her husband dirty looks, and squeezes his arm.

SPIVEY
I was outside my house last night...

JEAN
He saw an enormous raccoon. Startled him so, Reverend, he came running up the steps and tripped, got this nasty cut, didn't you sweetheart?

Jean drills her husband with a "don't you dare" look.

REVEREND PETERS
Well, Well. That is interesting. We do get some big raccoons out here in the country. Hope you're feeling up to coming to the Harvest Dance tonight.

Spivey grunts and Jean leads him and the children away.

JEAN
Don't worry we'll be there.

REVEREND PETERS
Wonderful.

EXT. ORCHARD

The orchard is by the river with the widow's house between it and the Spiveys. The bridge is in the background.

Minna is on a ladder picking apples. The kids approach, pulling a wagon in which the Broom rides seated on a stack of baskets.

MINNA
Now keep an eye out for the Spivey's car.

LUCY
We will.

The children begin picking fallen apples and putting them in baskets. The Broom observes, then hops off the wagon, and approaches the base of the tree.

MINNA
What's he doing now?

The Broom shifts its bristled bottom around like a weight lifter planting his feet. He wraps his shaft around the tree trunk. He flexes and bends, shaking the tree. An apple falls. He shakes faster, until the tree is vibrating.

Minna scurries down the ladder and, with the children, runs for safety beyond the tree's branches. Apples rain down. The Broom stops and the Shaws stare in amazement at the carpet of fruit surrounding the tree and as a result fail to notice Spivey's SUV exit the covered bridge

INT. SPIVEY SUV

Boxes fill the truck. The boys look out at the Shaws, who stand at a distance, with the Broom concealed by a tree.

SPIVEY
See anything boys?

RUSSELL
They're just picking apples.

EXT. ORCHARD

The Broom shakes another tree.

INT. SPIVEY MANSION - LIVINGROOM

Spivey and his sons unpack surveillance equipment - high powered binoculars on tripods, a telescope, a camera with a telephoto lens, and video camera.

JEAN
I think you've really lost it, Doug.

SPIVEY
Listen Jean, We're living next door to a witch, all right? An honest to God witch. I know it sounds incredible, but here's the good news. Once we shine the bright light of the 21st century on that woman, she's going to be out of here. She'll have to go hide under some rock.

EXT. ORCHARD

A close-up shows a bushel basket on its side as ripe red apples roll into it. Pulling back we see the basket is held by Owen as the Broom sweeps the apples along. Lucy and Minna load full bushel baskets onto the wagon. Many other full baskets are visible behind them,

LUCY
That's about it, mom.

Minna surveys their accomplishment and mops her brow.

MINNA
Well, that was a good days work.

LUCY
(teasing)
You better get ready for your big date.

MINNA
I was trying to remember the last time I had a dress on. It must have been a couple of years.

LUCY
You'll be fine mom.

INT. SPIVEY LIVINGROOM

Spivey's sons are looking through binoculars as Spivey prepares the video camera, loading tape.

EXT. BETWEEN ORCHARD AND BARN

Lucy pulls the wagon uphill as Owen and the broom push.

LUCY
C'mon.

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

SPIVEY
See anything suspicious?

RUSSELL
I'm not sure... I....

Through the binoculars he sees the Broom hopping next to Owen and Lucy as they pull the wagon into the barn. Russell jerks away from the binoculars.

RUSSELL (cont'd)
I saw it! I saw it! Those kids took it into the barn.

Spivey runs to the binoculars. He is too late. He goes to the video camera.

SPIVEY
Time to do some closer surveillance.

INT. BARN

Owen, Lucy and The Broom unload bushels from the wagon.

EXT. BETWEEN WIDOW'S AND SPIVEY'S

Spivey approaches furtively with his video cam.

INT. WIDOW'S BEDROOM

Minna is picking out her outfit, holding a skirt and placing different sweaters next to it. She goes to the window for more light and sees Spivey sneaking up her driveway toward the barn. She drops the clothes and rushes out.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Spivey stands in front of the open barn door clutching his camera and whirls around finding Owen and Lucy about to exit, carrying a bushel of apples.

SPIVEY
Where is it?!

MINNA
(o.s.)
Where's what?

Spivey turns to see Minna right behind him, holding a pitch fork. He stares at her malevolently.

MINNA (cont'd)
(to Owen and Lucy)
You kids go inside.

Minna watches the children walk away, the bushel basket held between them and sees the Broom's shaft swinging from the basket's edge like a cat's tail.

SPIVEY
You know exactly what I'm looking for.

MINNA
I think you're looking for trouble trespassing on my land.

SPIVEY
You don't scare me. What do you suppose the rest of Wicket is going to think when they find out.

MINNA
Find out what?

SPIVEY
About you and your sick little world over here. What'd you do with my dog's tail? Make some potion out of it? Eye of newt, tail of hound? Yeah...I've got your number.

MINNA
I don't know what you're talking about.

SPIVEY
Oh no? You'll find out. The whole world's going to find out about you.

Minna takes a step towards Spivey and lowers the pitch fork.

MINNA
I think you better clear off my property.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Granny watches Owen and Lucy remove apples from the basket placed on the table. Minna enters. The Broom uncoils out of the basket, hops out and sits on the edge of the table with it's bristles over the edge, swinging back and forth.

MINNA
We've got problems now. He's seen our friend here.

GRANDMA
Don't suppose he wants to keep it secret.

MINNA
He's out there with a video camera.

LUCY
I wonder when he saw him?

Owen mumbles something barely audible.

GRANDMA
What's that?

OWEN
(guilt, confessional)
Last night. He saw it last night behind the barn.

MINNA
Owen! How?

OWEN
I took him out. Mr. Spivey was there, messing with our tractor and looking for his dog's tail

MINNA
Well, it least it was dark. He probably didn't get a good look.

OWEN
(too quietly to be heard by the others)
He got a good look.

GRANDMA
One thing's clear, we've got to make sure he doesn't see him again.

LUCY
That won't be easy. That creep could sneak over here and look in our windows.

MINNA
I know. We might have to fix a room up in the attic. Have him stay there.

OWEN
All the time?

GRANDMA
Maybe he could go out at night some.

MINNA
That's the only way he'll be safe, Owen.

The Broom's shaft has slumped over. He hops down off the table and shuffles despondently toward the living room.

GRANDMA
(to Lucy)
Better go in there and pull the curtains.

OWEN
He's not going to like it up there.

Owen follows the Broom and Lucy into the livingroom.

GRANDMA
(to Minna)
Can't blame him really. Been stuck in a tree for a couple hundred years, now he's going to be stuck in the attic.

The kitchen clock chimes.

GRANDMA
Hey, you better get yourself ready. Your young man is going to be here soon.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Lucy pulls the curtains closed. The Broom is lying on the sofa, its shaft draped limply over the cushion's edge. Owen sits next to him.

OWEN
It won't be so bad. I'll come up after school, and on the weekends...

An upright piano stands in the corner of the livingroom. As Lucy leans around it to tug on a curtain her hand rests on the keyboard, producing a chord. The Broom looks up.

OWEN
Hey do that again.

LUCY
What?

OWEN
The piano. I think he likes it.

Lucy sits at the piano and starts to play. The Broom gets up and goes to her. She stops as the Broom curiously hits a couple of keys.

INT. MINNA'S BEDROOM

Minna is dressed for the dance, looking quite lovely. She paws through a dresser drawer searching for something and finally finds it - a tube of lipstick, practically used up. She puts some on her lips and, using her fingers, applies a little to her cheeks. Piano music plays in the background.

OWEN (O.S.)
Mom, mom, come here.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Minna descends the stairs to see the Broom and Lucy playing a duet. Granny and Owen stand next to them watching. Lucy stops and the Broom carries on by himself, pounding out one note at a time with extraordinary speed and occasionally rapping rhythmically on the keyboard cover.

MINNA
I guess he's feeling better.

The children, Granny and the Broom turn to look at Minna.

GRANDMA
Doesn't your mom look pretty?

OWEN
Sure does.

LUCY
You think you're going to dance, mom?

MINNA
Oh, probably not. I don't remember much about square dancing.

GRANDMA
Ah, there's nothing to it. Just do what the guy with the fiddle tells you.

Granny puts her arm through Minna's arm.

GRANDMA
Swing your partner round and round.

Granny starts dancing. Lucy plays accompaniment.

GRANDMA
Step to the middle, turn around, send your partner to the next one down.

Owen claps his hands as Granny dances around with a reluctant Minna. The Broom hops up onto the piano bench, then down to the floor with Minna and Grandma.

He dances, his shaft flexing and swaying above the bristles that shift back and forth in a way that suggests moving hips. Grandma sits down exhausted and watches the Broom. Lucy ceases playing and the broom dances briefly in silence. Tires sound outside. Granny checks the window.

GRANDMA
He's here.

MINNA
You better get him upstairs!

Owen and Lucy go the stairs. The Broom does not follow.

LUCY
C'mon.

The Broom looks from Lucy to Minna.

MINNA
Go on. You've got to go with them.

The Broom hops over to the children. Owen picks him up and the three go up the stairs.

OWEN
(to Lucy)
Think mom'll dance.

LUCY
Not a chance.

INT. WIDOW'S ATTIC

Lucy, Owen and the Broom survey the crowded dark space. The Broom shuffles over to the single window at the gable end.

LUCY
We can clean this up. It'll be a lot nicer.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Jack helps Minna with her coat. Granny stands nearby.

GRANDMA
Yep, we were just practicing. I think she's's all warmed up, ready to hit the dance floor.

MINNA
Oh Granny.

JACK
That's good 'cause I'm likely to make a fool of myself if I don't have a partner who knows what she's doing.

Granny puts her hand on Jack's arm.

GRANDMA
Honey, you and every other man.

INT. WIDOW'S ATTIC

Lucy and Owen arrange boxes. The Broom is at the window watching Minna and Jack get into Jack's pickup.

INT. KITCHEN

Granny, on a stool reaches for the old broom over the doorway.

INT. WIDOW'S ATTIC

The Broom is still at the window. Its posterior shakes rhythmically as it taps out a beat on the attic casement window. The window swings open. The Broom looks back and sees Owen and Lucy, absorbed in their housekeeping efforts.

The Broom leans out then hops up on to the window sill. He takes another look back, and then jumps.

EXT. WIDOW'S HOUSE

The Broom falls to the porch roof, bounces high on his bristles, does a double summersault and lands on the front lawn.

INT. WIDOW'S ATTIC

Granny enters, carrying the old broom the kitchen doorway.

GRANDMA
Hey kids. Look what I've got.

She holds out the old Broom.

OWEN
What's that for?

GRANDMA
Keep him company.

LUCY
I don't think that'll help.

GRANDMA
Well, you never know. Where is he?

They scan the room and see the open window. They rush to it.

LUCY
There he is!

EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

The Broom hops tentatively toward the covered bridge. Owen, Lucy's and Granny's voice call out from the attic window. The Broom hesitates, then hops into the bridge with giant kangaroo-like leaps.

INT. ATTIC

GRANDMA
Get your coats.

EXT. WIDOW'S BACK YARD

Granny and the children come racing out the back door, toward the old station wagon. They freeze in their tracks when they see the "runt" pumpkin in the backyard, now the size of a meteorological balloon. Granny pulls the children along.

GRANDMA
C'mon, we've got to get him.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

The Broom takes giant leaps along the road's edge. He stops now and then to check the scent on the ground. We see the ROADSIDE TAVERN ahead.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY

Granny, Owen and Lucy pile into the car.

INT. STATION WAGON - COUNTRY ROAD

Owen, Lucy and Grandma are in the front seat together.

LUCY
I guess his potion does work.

GRANDMA
Biggest pumpkin I ever saw.

INT. TAVERN

The three wood cutters are gathered around the pool table. Wayne is lining up a shot. DARYL chalks up his stick and surveys the deserted restaurant.

DARYL
Where is everybody?

CHUCK
Over at that church thing. You know.

WAYNE
Harvest dinner.

Wayne sinks his ball.

CHUCK
Yeah.

EXT. PARKING LOT

The Broom crosses the lot and looks in the tavern window.

INT. TAVERN

Wayne walks away from the table as Daryl sinks a shot.

DARYL
Hey where you going?

WAYNE
Got to take a leak.

Chuck stands looking at the table. Daryl pours the last of a pitcher into his beer glass.

DARYL
Hey Chuck, go get another pitcher.

CHUCK
Why me?

DARYL
Cause I got the last one, that's why.

Chuck heads for the bar. The door swings open and the Broom enters. Daryl is lining up a shot

DARYL
(without looking up)
It's cold out there. Shut the darn door.

The door shuts. The Broom surveys the space and goes over to the pool table. DARYL is lining up a shot, when "ploink", a ball is struck from behind him and hits another.

DARYL
Hey, you moron...

Daryl turns around and sees the Broom. The Broom makes a slight nod with its tip. Daryl looks it up and down. He extends his pool cue, but jerks back when the Broom strikes it.

The Broom lowers its shaft to the table, lines up on the cue ball and hits a six bank shot that sinks three separate balls. He shuffles from the table and once again surveys the restaurant, then leaves.

Chuck turns from the bar with a pitcher of beer. He approaches Daryl, who sits by the pool table, clutching the edges of his small table, staring at its surface.

CHUCK
Hey man, where's your glass?

Daryl is unresponsive. Wayne comes up from behind.

WAYNE
What's wrong with him?

EXT. CHURCH - RECREATION HALL

The station wagon slowly cruises by the rear of the church, where a large clapboard addition, the church's recreation hall, is lit up, with cars filling the adjacent parking lot.

INT. STATION WAGON

Granny, Owen,and Lucy are scanning the streets.

GRANDMA
I think we'd better get out and look.

EXT. OPPOSITE SIDE OF CHURCH RECREATION HALL

The broom hops along the sidewalk. Fiddle music can be heard coming from the recreation hall. The broom stops, sniffs the ground, and hops across the grass.

It looks inside, through large floor-to-ceiling windows, and sees people dancing. Once again, its posterior moves slightly to the rhythm of the music.

Nearby, two harvest dinner attendees approach a door and enter. The Broom hops over. The door is operated with a thumb latch and the broom is stymied. The door swings open. The Broom jumps back. Two diners exit chatting, oblivious to the Broom. They depart and, before the door closes, the Broom springs inside.

INT. HALLWAY

The hallway connecting the recreation hall to the church proper is filled with coat racks. As the door opens, the Broom hides in between the coats. New arrivals hang their coats and walk away.

INT. RECREATION HALL

The space is crowded. There are tables along the periphery, the center is occupied by dancers. It is dimly lit by candles held within the Harvest-themed centerpieces. At one of the tables, Doug and Jean Spivey hold court with some Wicket citizens.

SPIVEY
Truth is, with a fax machine, a computer and a modem, a venture capitalist like myself can run business just as easily here as anyplace else.

CITIZEN
Yep, I guess you're the wave of the future, all right.

SPIVEY
You bet we are.. Once our friends from the city get a look at Wicket, they're going to come to the same conclusion Jean and I did.

REVEREND PETERS
What's that, Doug?

SPIVEY
That life out here is the way life should be. A simple life. People still working the land, helping out their neighbors...

SQUARE DANCE CALLER
Okay everybody. Grab your partners.

ANOTHER CITIZEN
(to wife)
Let's get in on this one, honey.

The others turn to the dance floor.

REVEREND PETERS
(to Spiveys)
Going to join us?

SPIVEY
I think we'll sit this one out.

Jack and Minna sit at another table watching as the dancers get ready for the upcoming dance.

JACK
Want to try?

MINNA
Sure, why not.

They rise and walk towards the dance floor. Jean spies Minna.

JEAN
Check this out, Doug. Looks like your witch is actually going to dance.

SPIVEY
This is our chance, Jean.

JEAN
Our chance?

SPIVEY
To get some proof of that broom.

Spivey rises. On the floor, dancers take their positions facing each other in rows, Reverend Peters next to Minna.

REVEREND PETERS
...wonderful to see you, Minna. Really, just wonderful.

The music starts, and the square dance caller sings out the changes. Jack is having a hard time following the calls. He dances off in the wrong direction, bewildered.

Minna comes up from behind and locks arms with him. They laugh and smile at each other as they spin around.

JACK
I think you've done this before.

MINNA
It's coming back to me.

He releases her and she goes from arm to arm. As she passes from one partner to the next, they greet her warmly and return her smile.

PARTNER
Minna, it's great to see you.

ANOTHER PARTNER
Hey, Minna, long time no see.

THIRD PARTNER
Minna, you're looking lovely tonight.

EXT. RECREATION HALL

Owen and Lucy stare through the rec hall window, slack-jawed.

LUCY
Look, Owen, Look! Right there. Look!

OWEN
I don't see...Holy smoke...

LUCY
It's mom, Owen. She's...

OWEN
Dancing.

Grandma calls from behind them.

GRANDMA
Come on you kids. Check the parking lot.

INT. RECREATION HALL - DANCE FLOOR

Reaching the end of the row, Minna makes a turn and finds herself face to face with a strange figure in a long balmacaan overcoat, a scarf, and fedora.

It is the Broom, concealed within the coat, which it holds by the hanger, the hat balanced on its tip. He shifts back and forth in time to the music to the music. Minna looks around anxiously. She fastens more buttons on the coat, takes one of his sleeves and leads him away.

INT. HALLWAY - COAT RACKS

The Spiveys angrily search for his coat, momentarily buried between the coat racks.

SPIVEY
It's got to be here somewhere.

JEAN
Calm down. Calm down. We'll find it.

The recreation hall door swings opens. They see Minna enter with the Broom and the Spiveys step out from the coat racks.

JEAN
What on earth? That's your coat.

Spivey approaches.

SPIVEY
What's going on?

He looks down at the Broom's bristles.

SPIVEY
That's the thing, the Broom.

Spivey reaches for the Broom's hat.

MINNA
Don't touch him.

Spivey ignores her and removes the hat. The Broom's tip which was bent over to hold onto the hat, straightens out.

SPIVEY
Aha, there it is!

He pulls the coat off. It drops to the floor. The Broom lets go of the hanger and hops over the coat. It takes a step toward Spivey and pokes him in the chest. Jean steps back.

JEAN
D...D....Doug.

Minna takes a hold of the Broom, restraining it.

SPIVEY
I knew it. Let me see that thing.

MINNA
This thing is none of your business.

Minna tries to walk around Spivey.

SPIVEY
None of my business? I think it's everybody's business. I think everyone in Wicket will want to know there's a witch living with them.

Spivey reaches for it and Minna places the Broom behind her. Spivey pushes her aside.

The Broom stands motionless. Spivey steps toward it and the Broom's shaft drops forward at the bristles. The limp shaft rests on the floor.

Spivey is puzzled. He looks back at Minna.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
What's wrong with it?

He steps forward again and now straddles the Broom's shaft. It lifts sharply, striking Spivey in the groin. He doubles over in pain. Minna grabs the Broom and runs out.

EXT. CHURCH RECREATION HALL

Minna pushes through a thick hedge and runs off. Spivey exits hunched over. Jean stands at the open door.

JEAN
Doug, be careful!

In the parking lot, he sees Owen, peeking around cars.

OWEN
(loud whisper)
Here Broom, here Broom.

Owen rounds a car and finds himself gazing at a pair of feet. He looks up slowly to see Spivery.

SPIVEY
Where is it?

OWEN
Where's what?

SPIVEY
The Broom, you little wise guy.

Owen is silent.

SPIVEY
Listen kid, the cat's out of the bag. I'm going to find that thing and when I do the whole town's gonna know - your mom's a witch.

OWEN
She is not.

SPIVEY
Sure kid. Sure. She's not a witch, she just goes around with a witch's Broom.

OWEN
It's not hers. We found it. In a tree.

SPIVEY
Tree?

OWEN
The one you cut down.

The Shaw's station wagon pulls into the parking lot. Lucy sticks her head out the window.

LUCY
Owen.

Owen goes to the car. We hear indistinctly:

LUCY
Grandma thinks he probably went home.

Owen gets in the car and they drive off. Spivey and Jean get into their SUV and drive off.

EXT. CORNER OF RECREATION HALL BEHIND SHRUB

Minna, with the Broom, is about to sneak across the parking lot, but ducks down as Spivey's vehicle passes by.

INT. RECREATION HALL

Jack is dancing and releases his partner.

SQUARE DANCE CALLER
Now, fellas, back to your partner and take her arm, swing that pretty lady round and round.

The other dancers rejoin their partners. Jack scans the room for Minna. He returns to their table, still looking, and through the window sees her in the parking lot.

EXT CHURCH PARKING LOT

Minna puts the Broom down in the back of Jack's truck and pulls a tarp over it.

MINNA
Stay there and don't move.

She turns to see Jack approaching.

JACK
You OK?

MINNA
Just needed a little fresh air.

JACK
You want to go? I'll get our coats.

INT. SPIVEY SUV

Spivey is talking animatedly to his wife.

SPIVEY
...worth a fortune. Like having a Martian, for cripes sake. And she's keeping it a secret.

JEAN
You mean she's not a witch?

SPIVEY
No. No. She's just an idiot.

JEAN
But Doug, that thing is so...so unnatural.

SPIVEY
Unnaturally amazing is what it is. Unnaturally valuable. And know what else, sweetheart? It came out of our tree. The one I cut down.

Jean looks at her husband, uncomprehending

SPIVEY
It's ours, Jean. Our tree, our Broom.

EXT. JACK'S TRUCK - CHURCH PARKING LOT

Jack comes back with the coats, gets in the truck, starts up and reverses out of the parking space.

The Broom stands up uncertainly, causing the tarp to billow up. The truck goes forward and the Broom falls back down.

EXT. TAVERN

Spivey pulls his vehicle into a parking spot. He gets out of the SUV and enters the tavern.

INT. TAVERN

The wood cutters shoot pool. Spivey goes to them.

SPIVEY
Just the gentlemen I've been looking for. I've got a job for you.

DARRYL
Now?

CHUCK
What do we got to do?

SPIVEY
Well it's difficult to explain.

EXT. ROAD NEAR TAVERN

Jack's truck approaches the tavern. The tarp billows up again as the Broom attempts to regain his footing. The force of the wind slides him to the back of the truck bed.

INT. JACK'S TRUCK

JACK
Hey, I'm still hungry. Want some chili?

MINNA
Oh, no thanks. I'd better get home.

EXT. TAVERN PARKING LOT

As Jack's truck passes, Spivey exits with the wood cutters.

DARYL
(excited)
I know what you're talking about, man. I saw it. It was in here playing pool.

He punches Wayne in the arm.

DARYL (cont'd)
See? I told you I wasn't crazy.

WAYNE
I still don't believe it.

SPIVEY
You will. You will.

He opens his wallet and hands the wood-cutters a wad of cash.

SPIVEY
You'll get the rest when we're done.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD INTERSECTION

Jack's truck stops. The Broom rises, shedding the tarp. The truck pulls away and the Broom flips out the back.

INT. TRUCK

Minna's happiness on the dance floor has left an afterglow. Transformed, she touches Jack's shoulder.

MINNA
No really, I thought you were fine.

Jack gives her a sheepish look.

MINNA
OK, maybe not fine, but you never stepped on my feet.

JACK
Well, I'm pretty sure I stepped on somebody's....what in God's name is that?

In the truck's head lights Jack and Minna can see the Broom hopping along the side of the road, pacing the truck, but slightly ahead of it. It is like an unmanned pogo stick pumping away furiously. Minna draws a sharp breath.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

The truck screeches to a halt. The Broom stops ahead and looks back at the headlights. Jack gets out.

JACK
Do you see that?

The Broom hops off the road into the underbrush.

INT. TRUCK

Minna looks out at Jack, who stands at the side of the truck.

MINNA
See what? I didn't see anything.

JACK
Looked like a...like a stick..like a damn broom hopping along.

Jack fishes out a flashlight from the glove compartment.

JACK
You wait here.

EXT. JACK'S TRUCK

Jack gets out of the truck and pushes through the underbrush and into the woods, tracking the Broom.

Minna gets out and goes to the edge of the road. The Broom's shaft lifts out of the tall grass directly in front of her.

MINNA
What are you doing? I told you to stay put. You don't know what kind of...

She tries to grab the Broom but he hops about playfully.

MINNA
Stop it!

Jack exits the woods and sees Minna holding the Broom.

MINNA
(whisper)
...and I'll ask him in. Then you can get out, but don't make a move until...

Jack approaches. Minna conceals the Broom behind her.

JACK
What's going on?

MINNA
What do you mean?

JACK
That's the thing I saw. That Broom!

He tries to step around Minna. She turns and steps back.

JACK (cont'd)
Let me see it.

MINNA
It's just a broom, Jack.

JACK
I heard you talking to it. What in God's name is it?

He moves toward Minna as she moves back.

JACK
Minna, let me see it.

Minna continues to back up. Jack reaches for the shaft that is visible over her shoulder. Minna jerks back away from him and stumbles. She falls to the ground, seated on top of the Broom, with her hands wrapped tightly around the shaft.

JACK
Minna, let me see that thing!

Jack kneels, reaches to grab the bristles and pull the Broom out from under Minna. As he does, the Broom, with Minna, slides forward, just out of Jack's reach. Minna looks down at the Broom, alarmed.

JACK
What the...

Jack takes another step, arms outstretched, but as he moves along, the Broom rises slightly and moves forward, outpacing him.

Jack breaks into a run and the Broom lifts higher off the ground with Minna astride. She grips the shaft tightly and closes her eyes.

MINNA
Noooooooo!

The Broom, with Minna aboard, plunges through branches of hemlocks that line the road.

EXT. FIELD ON OTHER SIDE OF HEMLOCKS

Minna clings to the Broom, struggling to keep her balance as it rises and falls, occasionally dipping low enough for Minna's feet to scrape the ground.

MINNA
Put me down! Do you hear me.

The Broom climbs instead.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - JACK'S TRUCK

Jack stares at the row of hemlocks, with the full harvest moon floating just above them. Then, silhouetted against the yellow disk, he sees Minna sailing away with her coat and long hair blowing in the wind.

With a blank expression and robot-like movements, Jack climbs into his truck. He makes a slow U-turn as Spivey's SUV and the Wood Cutters truck pass in the opposite direction.

EXT. HAY FIELD - HAY GATHERED INTO TALL STACKS

The Broom and Minna descend, plowing through the top of one tall pile of hay and land roughly against another. Minna picks herself up. The Broom stands.

MINNA
You could have killed me! What was going through your head...or through your... your...through your...

The Broom hangs his shaft remorsefully and follows Minna as she sets out across the hay field

EXT. COVERED BRIDGE, BY THE WIDOW'S HOUSE

Minna and the Broom emerge from the covered bridge.

MINNA
... even more trouble for us. He seems like a nice guy, but I can't picture Officer Wilkie not making a big deal about you. If he and Spivey start talking with each other, there's going to be no place to hide.

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

Spivey and Jean are at the window. The Wood Cutters are in the background, watching TV.

SPIVEY
There she is. She's got it with her.
(to the Wood Cutters)
Okay boys, time to go to work.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

The Broom and Minna enter. Grandma sleeps in a chair. Owen and Lucy are asleep on the sofa. The Broom goes to Owen and taps his shoulder. Owen awakes.

OWEN
You came back!

He gets to his feet and hugs the Broom which, given its size, is like hugging himself. The Broom reciprocates and its shaft encircles the boy's shoulders.

Lucy and Grandma awaken and go to the Broom. Grandma looks at Minna, disheveled with straw stuck to her clothes.

GRANDMA
What happened to you?

MINNA
Well, I've had kind of a wild night.

LUCY
We know.

She goes to her mother and puts an arm around Minna's waist.

LUCY
Swing your partner round and round.

Lucy locks an arm through Minna's arm and does a two-step.

LUCY
My mom, the belle of the ball.

Minna protests, but smiles with her daughter as they twirl around.

MINNA
Lucy, Lucy.
(coming to a stop)
Listen, dancing like a giddy fool is not the most surprising thing I did to...

There is a loud knock at the door.

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT PORCH

Spivey stands at the door with Daryl, Chuck and Wayne who hold CHAINS, a BLANKET, and a SIX FOOT LENGTH OF PIPE.

SPIVEY
...then we'll take it back to the garage. It's pretty strong, so watch...

Minna opens the door.

MINNA
What do you want?

SPIVEY
You've got something that belongs to me.

Spivey pushes his way in followed by the Wood Cutters.

MINNA
What do you think you're doing?

Spivey looks from the open door to the living room window and catches sight of the Broom.

SPIVEY (O.S.)
There he is, get him!

Through the window and open door, we catch intermittent glimpses of the Wood Cutters wrestling with the Broom, hear Owen and Lucy shrieking, the sound of breaking furniture.

INT. WIDOW'S FRONT HALL

The Wood Cutters struggle to hold onto a writhing bundled form, chained to the pipe. Spivey is behind them as they move toward the door. Minna and her family are following the men.

OWEN
Mom. Stop them!

MINNA
You can't do this.

SPIVEY
Sure I can. It's mine. The tree was mine, the Broom is mine. All mine.

They exit.

EXT. PORCH

The Shaws follow them out, as the men carry the Broom away.

OWEN
You've got to do something, Mom!

INT. SPIVEY GARAGE

The garage is large and unevenly lit with corners in shadow. A strong overhead light illuminates the center of the space. Jean Spivey and her sons watch as the electric door slowly rises. Spivey and the Wood Cutters enter and drop the chained and bundled Broom on the floor. Doug Jr and Russell approach.

DOUG JR.
Is that it, dad?

SPIVEY
Stand back! That's it, all right. Russell, go and get the video camera.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY

Minna goes to her car, followed by Granny, Owen and Lucy. She opens the door and turns to her family.

MINNA
I'm not sure this will do any good.

GRANDMA
You just march in there. He's a policeman. It's his duty.

MINNA
He wouldn't even come to the phone.

GRANNY
He's not going to refuse you.

Minna gets in the car and leaves. Grandma leads Owen and Lucy to the door but Owen stops, staring at the Spivey house.

GRANDMA
Come on, honey.

Owen sits on an upturned log by the wood pile, heart broken.

INT. TAVERN

The tavern is deserted except for Jack, who sits in a booth near the bar, nursing a drink. WALTER, the Bartender, wipes the bar as Paula fills salt shakers.

WALTER
Yeah. I used to have a girlfriend like that. Had six cats, all of them black. Claimed she could tell people's fortunes using these weird cards.

JACK
No, No, No. That's not what I mean. I'm talking about a witch, a real...

PAULA
Geez, Jack, I'd expect that from most of the jerks that hang out around here. Let a woman act a little different, men start calling them names.

INT. SPIVEY GARAGE - DRIVEWAY

The three Wood Cutters each hold a rope tied to the Broom's shaft just above the bristles. The Broom hops and lunges, swinging its shaft wildly, jerking the Wood Cutters around.

Blitz is barking and straining at his leash, held by Doug Jr. Russell is videotaping and Jean trembles in the corner. Spivey watches.

When the Broom's tip catches the garage wall it rips a jagged hole in the drywall. It scrapes the wall again, scattering the garden tools hung there. It finally stops, its shaft rising and falling rhythmically as it "catches its breath".

DARYL
This thing ain't going to be doing any tricks for you.

Russell, working the videocam, steps a little too close. The Broom lunges and, with a swing, blasts the camera from the boy's hands. It shatters against the wall.

JEAN
For god's sake, Doug, it's dangerous. Let it go.

SPIVEY
Let it go? And have it living next door? We just need to teach it some manners. We need to...

He looks at the floor and picks up a large BRANCH PRUNER.

SPIVEY
...cut it down to size.

He opens and closes the pruners. The Broom suddenly straightens out.

WAYNE
Looks like you got his attention.

SPIVEY
One of you help me here.

Daryl ties off his rope to a support column. He and Spivey move in on the Broom and it begins to spin.

SPIVEY
Hold him tight.

Chuck and Wayne pull hard on their ropes as the Broom spins faster and faster. Spivey holds back, watching smoke come from where the Broom is held by the ropes. Suddenly, POP! Wayne and Chuck fall backward as the burned ropes break away.

SPIVEY
C'mon! Get up, get him!

A single rope now holds the Broom. The Broom spins, pulling hard against it. POP! The Broom is free and spins across the garage like a wild top.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

The Broom blasts through the garage door, slams into Spivey's SUV and falls to the ground.

Blitz comes running out of the hole in the garage door. As the dizzy and wobbly Broom gets up, the dog latches onto the shaft, holding tight with bared teeth.

The Spiveys and Wood Cutters come rushing out.

DOUG, JR.
Sic 'em, Blitz!

The Wood Cutters, holding pruners and axes, close in.

SPIVEY
Let the dog take care of him.

The Broom snaps his shaft around violently but the dog continues to hold on. The Broom winds up a couple of turns, like an Olympic hammer thrower, and slowly lifts the dog into the air. The Broom gives a final spin and snaps his shaft, sending the dog flying high into the sky.

EXT BACK OF WIDOW'S

Owen watches the dog fly overhead.

EXT. RIVER NEXT TO WIDOW'S

Blitz lands in the water with a large splash.

EXT. BETWEEN WIDOW'S AND SPIVEY'S

The Broom hops to the Shaw house pursued by his tormentors.

EXT. WIDOW'S WOOD PILE

Owen leaps to his feet.

OWEN
Come here, boy! Come here.

The Broom hops off behind the hen house. Owen joins him.

BETWEEN WIDOW'S AND SPIVEY'S

Spivey directs his sons, pointing to the hen house.

EXT. HEN HOUSE

As Owen peeks from behind a corner he hears the Spivey boys coming from behind. He grabs the Broom and runs, hiding by a Volkswagon sized boulder at the water's edge.

EXT. RIVER BY ROCK

We see Blitz from water level doing the dog paddle toward Owen, crouched behind the boulder holding the Broom.

Blitz gets to the shore and starts barking at the boy and Broom. Owen climbs on top of the boulder to escape the dog. Doug Jr. spies Owen.

DOUG, JR.
There he is! Over there!

Spivey and his crew approach Owen, who stands, clutching the Broom, atop the boulder at the river's edge.

SPIVEY
Throw it down, kid.
(to Wayne and Chuck)
Get up there and get it.

The Wood Cutters climb the boulder. Owen takes a step back.

WAYNE
You little creep. Give me that thing.

Wayne reaches out to grab Owen. Chuck, on his hands and knees, gets a hold of the boy's foot.

The Broom, with Owen clutching him tightly, lurches off the boulder and into flight. Owen sails backward, hits the river and bounces along its surface like a skipping stone, still holding onto the Broom, which is flying uncertainly, just a few feet above the water.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF RIVER

Owen crashes into marsh grass and brush.

EXT. RIVER BY ROCK

Chuck and Wayne stare dumbfounded across the river.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF RIVER

He picks his way through the woods and bramble, carrying the Broom.

He pauses by the covered bridge and hesitantly steps up to the road. He is suddenly illuminated as Spivey, sitting in his SUV within the bridge, hits the headlights.

Owen gasps, clutching the Broom and starts running. Darryl jumps out of the truck, chasing him. Owen's feet pound the roadside, then slowly become airborne as the Broom lifts him up. Spivey pulls up in the truck.

SPIVEY
(to the woodcutter)
Get in!

Owen gets his leg over the Broom, holding on tight, as the Broom accelerates away.

EXT. ROAD

The SUV roars up, closing the gap. The road curves.

EXT. FOREST

The Broom plunges straight ahead into the surrounding scrub forest. The SUV follows.

As Owen flies through the woods, he is painfully lashed by the branches and finally falls right off the Broom. He lands on the leafy ground.

The SUV bears down on him.

The Broom comes up from behind Owen and slides his shaft beneath the boy and stands upright. Owen is now seated on the top of the Broom's bristles with his hands wrapped round the shaft. The Broom springs through the woods with Owen riding like a kangaroo jockey.

Spivey's SUV crashes along behind him.

EXT. HAY FIELD

Owen exits the woods into a hay field. The Broom takes a few more leaps and springs into the air, flying once again.

EXT. A LARGE BARN

Both ends of the barn are open. The Broom approaches scraping the ground, with the truck just behind. The Broom starts to rise. It looks like it's going into the side of the barn, but, barely...it passes through the hayloft door.

EXT. BACK OF LARGE BARN

Spivey's truck comes shooting out of the barn, the Broom slightly ahead. The Broom dips down and Owen bounces off the SUV. With a burst of speed, the Broom pulls away.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

They shoot down a driveway. Owen makes the turn onto the road as Spivey, in hot pursuit, takes out a mailbox.

INT. ROADSIDE TAVERN

Jack, seated in his booth, speaks earnestly to Paula.

JACK
I'm telling you the truth. She flies around on a broom.

PAULA
(lifting Jack's drink)
How many has this guy had.

JACK
I'm serious, she does.

PAULA
Well that's good. Maybe she can give you a ride home.

JACK
What?

He follows Paula's gaze. Through the window, he sees Minna about to enter. He slumps down into the booth.

JACK
(whisper)
I'm not here.

PAULA
What?

JACK
Does she have her Broom?

PAULA
You jerk.

Minna walks into the tavern, still disheveled from her flight and altercation with Spivey and the Wood Cutters.

PAULA
You okay?

MINNA
I need to find Jack Wilkie. Have you seen him?

Jack, makes hand signals to Paula: "no".

PAULA
(ignoring Jack)
Sure sweetie, he's right here.

Minna steps forward and looks into the booth. Jack, slumped over, tries to appear as if he's just relaxing.

JACK
Oh. Hi. How you doing?

Minna slides into the booth as he uneasily straightens up.

PAULA
(to Minna)
Can I get you anything? Some hot tea?

MINNA
Thanks.

Paula steps away.

MINNA
I know that must have been quite a shock seeing me...uh...

JACK
Hmmm...

MINNA
I didn't know he could do that.

JACK
He?

MINNA
He. It. I know I should've told you about it...I ...we...didn't think we should tell anyone. The children felt very strongly about it. They didn't want anyone to know.

JACK
I don't blame them.

MINNA
Really?

JACK
Well, sure. It'd be pretty tough, other kids knowing something like that.

Minna looks at him, puzzled.

MINNA
I guess. But someone has found out.

JACK
You mean besides me?

MINNA
Yes, Doug Spivey. He's taken it and I'm afraid something terrible will happen.

JACK
Taken what?

MINNA
The Broom. Spivey came into the house with those idiot wood cutters.

JACK
They took your Broom?

MINNA
Yes, Jack. I need your help.

JACK
Can't you just put a hex on him or something?

MINNA
A hex?

JACK
You know, some kind of curse.

MINNA
What are you talking about?

JACK
I don't know what you call it.
(wiggles his fingers)
The hocus pocus?...
(closes one eye)
The evil eye?...

He holds out his fingers and makes the vaporizing noise.

MINNA
Wait a minute.

She stands and looks down at him crammed into the corner of the booth.

MINNA
You think I'm a...

Through the window, Minna sees Owen fly by, pursued by Spivey.

MINNA
Oh my God.

She runs out as Paula approaches with a pot of tea.

PAULA
She O.K?

JACK
Neighbor stole her Broom.

PAULA
(peeved)
You got a weird sense of humor, Jack.

EXT. TAVERN

Minna's station wagon screeches out of the parking lot.

EXT. COVERED BRIDGE - FRONT OF WIDOW'S

Owen flies out of the bridge. He lands in the Widow's yard, rolling on the lawn. He picks up the Broom and runs inside.

Spivey's SUV, followed by Minna's station wagon, exit the bridge. Spivey pulls into his driveway and up to the garage. Minna pulls into her driveway.

EXT. SPIVEY GARAGE - DRIVEWAY

Spivey and crew exit the garage carrying the pipe, coils of rope, axes and a chain saw. Spivey's sons follow them.

RUSSELL
Can we come,dad?

SPIVEY
I got a job for you boys. Run over there by the barn. Get some straw.

DOUG JR.
What are we going to do?

SPIVEY.
Gonna' have us a bonfire.

RUSSELL AND DOUG JR.
Cool.

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT DOOR

Spivey climbs the steps with Wayne and Chuck. The door opens. Minna stands there, silently.

SPIVEY
(belligerently, loudly)
I know it's in there. Do I have to...

Minna raises her fingers to her lips.

MINNA
Shhhh. Thank heavens you're here.

INT. WIDOW'S HOUSE

The group of adults tiptoes past the children, who sit silently in the living room. The wood-cutters and Spivey trade puzzled looks.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

The Broom leans against the counter rigid. Granny stands nearby, holding the fireplace poker raised in her arms.

MINNA
(continues whispering)
He's asleep.

GRANDMA
Tired out from flying.

MINNA
But I'm afraid he'll wake up. Something happened to him. I don't know if it was flying or what... But he's... He's become violent, unpredictable - evil.

Spivey nods his head, knowingly.

SPIVEY
(whispering to Wood Cutters)
Tie him up.

The Wood Cutters cautiously approach the Broom.

GRANDMA
Be careful, don't wake him.

The men gently handle the Broom and start wrapping it in rope, affixing it to the post.

MINNA
What are you going to do with him?

SPIVEY
Burn it.

Minna draws a breath.

GRANDMA
It's for the best, Honey.

INT. TAVERN

Jack is pulling his jacket on. Walter is nearby mopping the floor. Paula is clearing Jack's table.

PAULA
Listen, if you don't want to say what the real problem is, that's okay, but...

JACK
I told you, she's ...

Paula holds up her hand.

PAULA
Enough of that wise guy stuff. Be a gentleman.

Jack buries his head in his hands.

PAULA
You've got to understand something, Jack. Whenever you get to know somebody, you discover little things about them that seem odd at first. Right, Walt?

WALTER
Unh? Yeah, that first time you catch them picking their teeth with a dinner fork, it's a real eye opener.

PAULA
Well, that's not exactly what...

JACK
Listen, I've got to go home.

EXT. PARKING LOT - JACK'S TRUCK

Jack climbs into his pick up. He fumbles around, checking his pockets for his keys. There is a knock at his window. It's Paula holding his hat. He rolls down his window.

PAULA
Listen, Jack, if you really like somebody it doesn't matter if they pick their teeth with a pitchfork.

She hands him his hat.

PAULA
Sometimes you just gotta' take the leap.

EXT. WIDOW'S PORCH

The Widow's family is gathered, looking toward the Spivey's.

EXT. EDGE OF SPIVEY'S DRIVEWAY

Spivey, his sons, wife and the wood cutters stand around the Broom, now staked in a pile of straw.

Spivey takes out a cigar and lights it with a kitchen match, then tosses the match into the straw. It begins to crackle.

EXT. COVERED BRIDGE

Jack's truck roars out of the covered bridge and pulls into the Widow's driveway.

EXT. PORCH

OWEN
Mom, Mom, it's Jack!

EXT. BETWEEN WIDOW'S AND SPIVEY'S DRIVEWAY

Jack leaps out and rushes to the fire. Spivey restrains him.

SPIVEY
This is none of your business.

JACK
Let go of me.

Minna is running off the porch followed by her family.

MINNA
Jack, No!

Jack pushes Spivey away and runs to the fire. He attempts to stomp out the flames and untie the Broom, but the flames are too high.

Jack is pulled away from the fire by Wayne and Chuck. His pant cuff is on fire. The Wood Cutters slap it out.

CHUCK
What are you, crazy, man?

DARYL
You know what that thing is?

JACK
(coughing)
It's...it's a Witch's Broom.

WAYNE
Well, let it burn, man. Let it burn.

Jack rises and limps back to his truck.

EXT. MINNA'S DRIVEWAY

The Shaws stand by Jack's truck, watching him approach, the bonfire raging in the background.

JACK
Sorry.

Together they watch the Broom go up in flames.

MINNA
Are you OK? How's your leg?

Granny and Minna kneel to look at Jack's burned ankle.

GRANDMA
I got just the thing for this.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Jack lays on the sofa, coughing. The Widow's family attends him. Granny dresses the burn with a salve.

MINNA
Granny's been making this for years.

GRANDMA
Best thing in the world for burns, cuts, scrapes. Put it on cow udders, too.

Jack winces as Granny applies the salve.

GRANDMA
I think he could use a little of my slumber-time tea, too.

MINNA
I'll get it.

Minna goes to the kitchen. Granny stands up.

GRANDMA
Make it strong.

Owen stands, looking sympathetically at Jack.

OWEN
I knew you'd come back to help us.

JACK
I got here late. I'm sorry.

Owen displays remarkable equanimity considering he's lost his best friend, the Broom.

OWEN
That's okay.

Grandma reaches out and pats Jack's arm.

GRANDMA
You tried, honey. That's what matters.

Minna returns with the tea.

GRANDMA
Okay, kids. Let's give Jack some peace and quiet. Bed time.

Grandma, Lucy and Owen go upstairs. Minna sits with Jack as he drinks some tea.

JACK
(sipping the tea)
That's different. What's in there?

MINNA
Another one of Granny's special concoctions.

Jack abruptly pulls the cup from his lips.

JACK
Wait a minute. She's one, too, isn't she?

MINNA
One what?

JACK
You know.

He sniffs the tea then he looks up at Minna.

JACK
Ah, who cares.

He gulps down the tea.

JACK (cont'd)
Not going to turn me into a frog?

MINNA
Wait a minute, you still think... Jack, we found that Broom in the old oak tree.

JACK
(complacent)
Um. That's OK.

MINNA
What do you mean, "that's okay"? I'm telling you the truth.

JACK
Aw Minna, nobody'd keep a thing like that secret.

Minna takes the empty tea cup from Jack, and turns to place it on a tray.

MINNA
Well, if you really think I'm a witch, why did you come...?

She turns to Jack. His eyes are closed.

MINNA (cont'd)
Jack?

He is sound asleep.

EXT. SHAW HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

All the lights are off in the house. Everything is still.

EXT. THE WIDOW'S BACK DOOR - WOOD PILE

The Broom wraps his shaft around the handle of the ax and yanks it from a piece of wood. The BROOM'S SHAFT is different now, as WHITE AS SNOW.

As it moves away from the house, holding the ax high in the air, we see THE REST OF THE BROOM IS ENTIRELY WHITE.

INT. SPIVEY BEDROOM

Spivey and his wife are in bed. A LOUD KNOCKING awakens Jean. She shakes her husband. The knock repeats. Spivey rouses himself, rubbing his eyes.

JEAN
Doug what is that?

INT. SPIVEY ENTRY HALL

Spivey descends the grand staircase. The KNOCKING continues.

SPIVEY
For Christ's sake.

Spivey swings open the door and sees the Broom holding the ax. The Broom points the ax towards Spivey as if it were an accusatory finger. Spivey slams the door.

EXT. SPIVEY'S FRONT STEPS

The Broom starts to spin around.

INT. SPIVEY ENTRY HALL

Jean, at the top of the stairway, looks down at her husband.

JEAN
You look like you've seen a ghost.

SPIVEY
I have.

EXT. SPIVEY'S FRONT DOOR

The Broom spins faster and faster. It turns into a blur, like a tornado.

INT. SPIVEY ENTRY HALL AND HOUSE

The Broom crashes through the front door. Spivey leaps back as the room is showered in splintering wood.

The Broom passes through the house causing great destruction and then exits through the back wall, leaving a gaping hole large enough to drive a truck through.

Jean is hysterical. Doug Jr. and Russell join her on the staircase.

Spivey looks out the hole and sees the Broom spinning away, kicking up dirt and spraying debris. The small white tornado turns to make another pass at the house.

The Spiveys run to their cellar as the Broom takes off a corner of the kitchen.

The destruction continues.

INT. DAY - WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Jack awakes. He rises and goes to the window and beholds Spivey's ruined house where only a couple of chimneys remain.

EXT. SPIVEY HOUSE

Jack hastily approaches the remains of the house. He steps onto the mountain of debris and cups his hands to his mouth.

JACK
Hello! Hello! Anybody here?

Some boards jiggle and Jack hears the muffled voices of the Spivey family:

VOICES
Help, we're in here. We're in here.

INT. WIDOW'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Granny and Minna look out at the wreckage of the Spivey house. Minna has spots of white paint on her face.

MINNA
"Fix it."

GRANDMA
He did.

EXT. SPIVEY HOUSE

Jack stands over a hole in the debris, holding up a large plank with his back as the Spiveys emerge from below. Jack lets the board fall. The Spiveys look around nervously.

SPIVEY
Thank God you heard us. We've got to get out of here.

Spivey pushes his family ahead of him.

JACK
What happened?

SPIVEY
He might come back any minute.

JACK
Who?

Spivey stops and turns to Jack.

SPIVEY
The ghost. The ghost of the Broom.

JACK
He did this?

EXT. WIDOW'S BACK DOOR STOOP

A bucket of white paint with a brush resting on top remains on the stoop.

The Shaw family, in their bathrobes, step out and peruse the devastation next door.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

Spivey hastily removes the boards and bricks that cover his SUV. He barks orders to his family.

SPIVEY
Come on, get in! That thing could come back any minute.

He turns around to see the Shaw family lined up.

MINNA
Mr. Spivey, what happened?

SPIVEY
It's that Broom. It's after us!

MINNA
But we burned it.

Spivey climbs into his vehicle, and speaks to Minna through the open window.

SPIVEY
It's the ghost, the ghost of the Broom.
It'll come after you next.

MINNA
Oh dear.

Spivey roars out of his driveway. Jack and the Shaws walk toward the Widow's house. Owen and Lucy sprint ahead.

JACK
Is he right?

GRANDMA
We don't have anything to worry about.

Minna puts her arm around Jack.

MINNA
Trust us.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY

Minna, Jack and Granny see Lucy and Owen standing by the little sapling at the end of the driveway.

OWEN
Come look!

They go to the children.

LUCY
It's getting bigger.

The tree is now about six feet tall.

A V-formation of geese fly overhead, heading south for the winter. Lucy, Owen, Grandma, Minna and Jack look up to watch them. The geese fly out of view and we hold on the gray sky as it turns to blue. A TITLE appears on the screen:

THE FOLLOWING SUMMER

The camera pans down and shows the foliage of an IMMENSE OAK TREE where the sapling stood. In the background all traces of the Spivey mansion are gone.

EXT. VEGETABLE STAND

A row of cars is at the stand, now twice the length it was before. Reverend Peters speaks to Granny, as shoppers fill their bags with produce. He gazes toward the open meadow that held the Spivey mansion.

REVEREND PETERS
...hard to understand. Good people like that. Tornado touches down, in October yet, takes just one house away. Can't even tell it was ever there.

GRANDMA
Well, Reverend, the Lord works in mysterious ways.

REVEREND PETERS
That he does, Addie. That he does. Say, Have you've got any of Minna's delicious apple butter left?

GRANDMA
(bending down to search in box beneath the stand)
You know, I think I did have one left from last fall. Saw it in her just the other...ah...here it is.

Granny rises holding the jar and hands it to the Reverend.

REVEREND PETERS
Wonderful. I've got the Spiveys new address. I know they'd love a jar of Minna's apple butter.

He holds the jar up admiringly. A close up reveals that, yes, a bit of mouse is visible within, unnoticed by Grandma or the Reverend. He directs his attention to the produce on the stand - truly magnificent - unusually large specimens of tomatoes, cucumbers and lettuce.

REVEREND PETERS
Goodness gracious. Minna's really working some magic back there in the garden this year.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN

Jack, in overalls, kneels in the garden and pushes back leaves to reveal giant strawberries. He puffs on a pipe.

JACK
Sweetheart, come here. Look at these.

Minna joins him. He holds out a strawberry and she bites it.

Owen and Lucy come around the row of corn and see Jack and Minna. They hold the black kettle from the fireplace. Lucy holds the ladle.

LUCY
We're almost out. Have you seen him?

JACK
We thought he was with you.

The family hears the faint sound of the piano. They look toward the house and smile. We slowly move toward the house, now neat as a pin. The painted shutters are hung straight, the landscaping trimmed back. We pass through an open window to the living room. From behind, we see the Broom, still wearing some white paint, playing a simple rag. The door opens and Owen, Lucy, Minna and Jack enter. Owen sits by the Broom and plays a simple bass line. Jack and Minna dance, then open and extend their arms to Lucy, who joyfully enters their warm embrace.